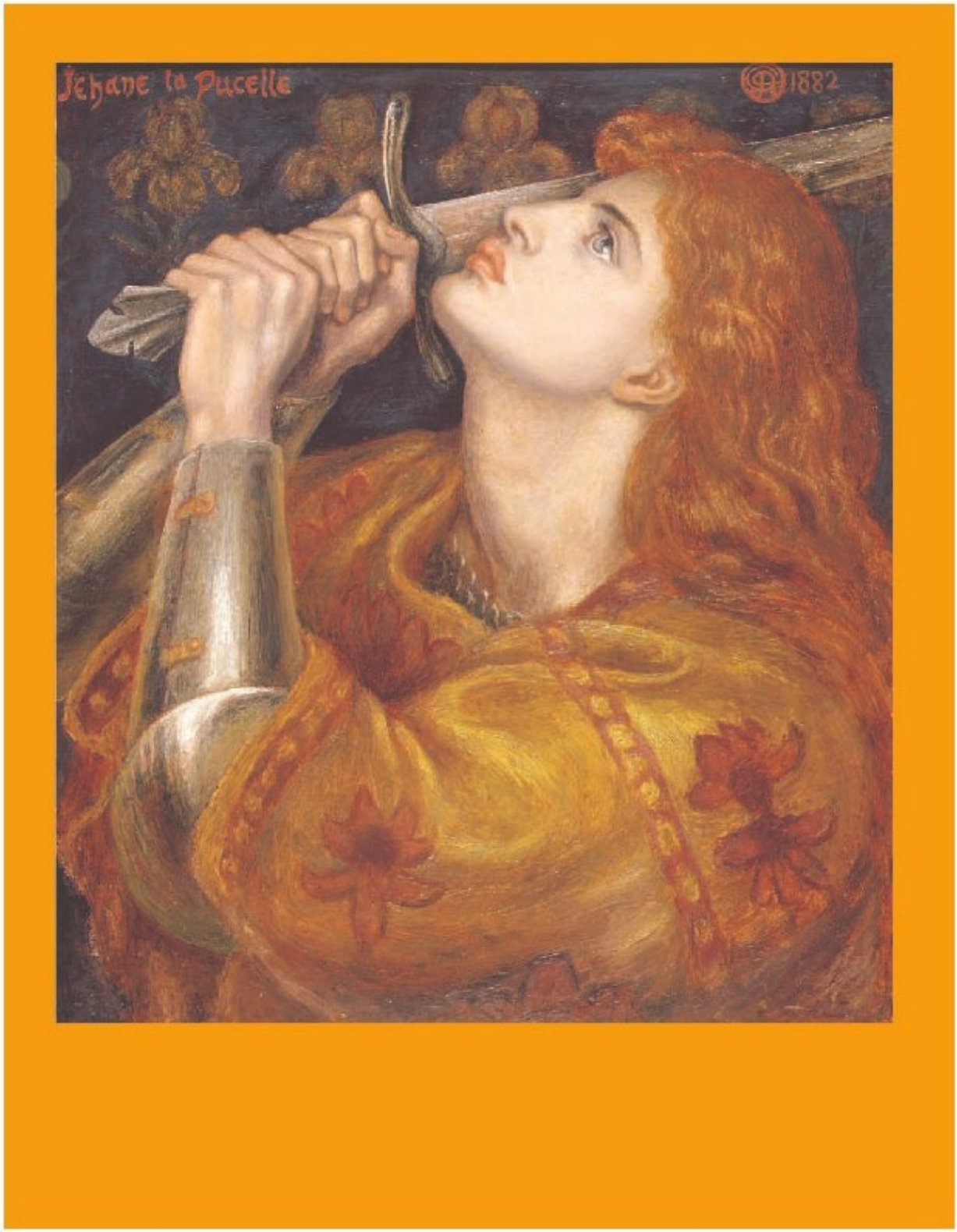
A Mission From God

William Kern



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by

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INTRODUCTION

Born at Domremy in Champagne, probably on 6 January, 1412; died at Rouen, 30 May, 1431. The village of Domremy lay upon the confines of territory which recognized the suzerainty of the Duke of Burgundy, but in the protracted conflict between the Armagnacs (the party of Charles VII, King of France), on the one hand, and the Burgundians in alliance with the English, on the other, Domremy had always remained loyal to Charles.

Jacques d'Arc, Joan's father, was a small peasant farmer, poor but not needy.

Joan seems to have been the youngest of a family of five. She never learned to read or write but was skilled in sewing and spinning, and the popular idea that she spent the days of her childhood in the pastures, alone with the sheep and cattle, is quite unfounded. All the witnesses in the process of rehabilitation spoke of her as a singularly pious child, grave beyond her years, who often knelt in the church absorbed in prayer, and loved the poor tenderly. Great attempts were made at Joan's trial to connect her with some superstitious practices supposed to have been performed round a certain tree, popularly known as the "Fairy Tree"

(l'Arbre des Dames), but the sincerity of her answers baffled her judges. She had sung and danced there with the other children, and had woven wreaths for Our Lady's statue, but since she was twelve years old she had held aloof from such diversions.

It was at the age of thirteen and a half, in the summer of 1425, that Joan first became conscious of that manifestation, whose supernatural character it would now be rash to question, which she afterwards came to call her "voices" or her

"counsel." It was at first simply a voice, as if someone had spoken quite close to her, but it seems also clear that a blaze of light accompanied it, and that later on she clearly discerned in some way the appearance of those who spoke to her, iii

recognizing them individually as St. Michael (who was accompanied by other angels), St. Margaret, St. Catherine, and others. Joan was always reluctant to speak of her voices. She said nothing about them to her confessor, and constantly refused, at her trial, to be inveigled into descriptions of the appearance of the saints and to explain how she recognized them. None the less, she told her judges: "I saw them with these very eyes, as well as I see you."

Great efforts have been made by rationalistic historians, such as M. Anatole France, to explain these voices as the result of a condition of religious and hysteri-cal exaltation which had been fostered in Joan by priestly influence, combined with certain prophecies current in the countryside of a maiden from the bois chesnu (oak wood), near which the Fairy Tree was situated, who was to save France by a miracle. But the baselessness of this analysis of the phenomena has been fully exposed by many non-Catholic writers. There is not a shadow of evidence to support this theory of priestly advisers coaching Joan in a part, but much which contradicts it. Moreover, unless we accuse the Maid of deliberate falsehood, which no one is prepared to do, it was the voices which created the state of patriotic exaltation, and not the exaltation which preceded the voices. Her evidence on these points is clear.

Although Joan never made any statement as to the date at which the voices revealed her mission, it seems certain that the call of God was only made known to her gradually. But by May, 1428, she no longer doubted that she was bidden to go to the help of the king, and the voices became insistent, urging her to present herself to Robert Baudricourt, who commanded for Charles VII in the neighbouring town of Vaucouleurs. This journey she eventually accomplished a month later, but Baudricourt, a rude and dissolute

soldier, treated her and her mission with scant respect, saying to the cousin who accompanied her: “Take her home to her father and give her a good whipping.”

Meanwhile the military situation of King Charles and his supporters was growing more desperate. Orléans was invested (12 October, 1428), and by the close of the year complete defeat seemed imminent. Joan’s voices became urgent, and even threatening. It was in vain that she resisted, saying to them: “I am a poor girl; I do not know how to ride or fight.” The voices only reiterated: “It is God who commands it.” Yielding at last, she left Domremy in January, 1429, and again visited Vaucouleurs.

Baudricourt was still skeptical, but, as she stayed on in the town, her persistence gradually made an impression on him. On 17 February she announced a great defeat which had befallen the French arms outside Orléans (the Battle of the iv

Herrings). As this statement was officially confirmed a few days later, her cause gained ground. Finally she was suffered to seek the king at Chinon, and she made her way there with a slender escort of three men-at-arms, she being attired, at her own request, in male costume — undoubtedly as a protection to her modesty in the rough life of the camp. She always slept fully dressed, and all those who were intimate with her declared that there was something about her which repressed every unseemly thought in her regard.

She reached Chinon on 6 March, and two days later was admitted into the presence of Charles VII. To test her, the king had disguised himself, but she at once saluted him without hesitation amidst a group of attendants. From the beginning a strong party at the court — La Trémoille, the royal favourite, foremost among them — opposed her as a crazy visionary, but a secret sign, communicated to her by her voices, which she made known to Charles, led the king, somewhat half-heartedly, to believe in her mission. What this sign was, Joan never revealed, but it is now most commonly believed that this “secret of the king” was a doubt Charles had conceived of the legitimacy of his birth, and which Joan had been supernaturally authorized to set at rest.

Still, before Joan could be employed in military operations she was sent to Poitiers to be examined by a numerous committee of learned bishops and doctors. The examination was of the most searching and formal character. It is regret-table in the extreme that the minutes of the proceedings, to which Joan frequently appealed later on at her trial, have altogether perished. All that we know is that her ardent faith, simplicity, and honesty made a favourable impression. The theologians found nothing heretical in her claims to supernatural guidance, and, without pronouncing upon the reality of her mission, they thought that she might be safely employed and further tested.

Returning to Chinon, Joan made her preparations for the campaign. Instead of the sword the king offered her, she begged that search might be made for an ancient sword buried, as she averred, behind the altar in the chapel of Ste-Catherine-de-Fierbois. It was found in the very spot her voices indicated. There was made for her at the same time a standard bearing the words Jesus, Maria, with a picture of God the Father, and kneeling angels presenting a fleur-de-lis.

But perhaps the most interesting fact connected with this early stage of her mission is a letter of one Sire de Rotslaer written from Lyons on 22 April, 1429, which was delivered at Brussels and duly registered, as the manuscript to this day attests, before any of the events referred to received their fulfilment. The Maid, he reports, said "that she would save Orléans and would compel the English to v

raise the siege, that she herself in a battle before Orléans would be wounded by a shaft but would not die of it, and that the King, in the course of the coming summer, would be crowned at Reims, together with other things which the King keeps secret."

Before entering upon her campaign, Joan summoned the King of England to withdraw his troops from French soil. The English commanders were furious at the audacity of the demand, but Joan by a rapid movement entered Orléans on 30

April. Her presence there at once worked wonders. By 8 May the English forts which encircled the city had all been captured, and the siege raised,

though on the 7th Joan was wounded in the breast by an arrow. So far as the Maid went she wished to follow up these successes with all speed, partly from a sound warlike instinct, partly because her voices had already told her that she had only a year to last. But the king and his advisers, especially La Trémoille and the Archbishop of Reims, were slow to move. However, at Joan's earnest entreaty a short campaign was begun upon the Loire, which, after a series of successes, ended on 18 June with a great victory at Patay, where the English reinforcements sent from Paris under Sir John Fastolf were completely routed. The way to Reims was now practically open, but the Maid had the greatest difficulty in persuading the commanders not to retire before Troyes, which was at first closed against them. They captured the town and then, still reluctantly, followed her to Reims, where, on Sunday, 17 July, 1429, Charles VII was solemnly crowned, the Maid standing by with her standard, for — as she explained — "as it had shared in the toil, it was just that it should share in the victory."

The principal aim of Joan's mission was thus attained, and some authorities assert that it was now her wish to return home, but that she was detained with the army against her will. The evidence is to some extent conflicting, and it is probable that Joan herself did not always speak in the same tone. Probably she saw clearly how much might have been done to bring about the speedy expulsion of the English from French soil, but on the other hand she was constantly oppressed by the apathy of the king and his advisers, and by the suicidal policy which snatched at every diplomatic bait thrown out by the Duke of Burgundy.

An abortive attempt on Paris was made at the end of August. Though St-Denis was occupied without opposition, the assault which was made on the city on 8 September was not seriously supported, and Joan, while heroically cheering on her men to fill the moat, was shot through the thigh with a bolt from a crossbow.

The Duc d'Alençon removed her almost by force, and the assault was abandoned.

The reverse unquestionably impaired Joan's prestige, and shortly afterwards, when, through Charles' political counsellors, a truce was signed with the Duke of vi

Burgundy, she sadly laid down her arms upon the altar of St-Denis.

The inactivity of the following winter, mostly spent amid the worldliness and the jealousy of the Court, must have been a miserable experience for Joan. It may have been with the idea of consoling her that Charles, on 29 December, 1429, ennobled the Maid and all her family, who henceforward, from the lilies on their coat of arms, were known by the name of Du Lis. It was April before Joan was able to take the field again at the conclusion of the truce, and at Melun her voices made known to her that she would be taken prisoner before Midsummer Day. Neither was the fulfilment of this prediction long delayed. It seems that she had thrown herself into Compiègne on 24 May at sunrise to defend the town against Burgundian attack. In the evening she resolved to attempt a sortie, but her little troop of some five hundred encountered a much superior force. Her followers were driven back and retired desperately fighting. By some mistake or panic of Guillaume de Flavy, who commanded in Compiègne, the drawbridge was raised while still many of those who had made the sortie remained outside, Joan amongst the number. She was pulled down from her horse and became the prisoner of a follower of John of Luxemburg. Guillaume de Flavy has been accused of deliberate treachery, but there seems no adequate reason to suppose this. He continued to hold Compiègne resolutely for his king, while Joan's constant thought during the early months of her captivity was to escape and come to assist him in this task of defending the town.

No words can adequately describe the disgraceful ingratitude and apathy of Charles and his advisers in leaving the Maid to her fate. If military force had not availed, they had prisoners like the Earl of Suffolk in their hands, for whom she could have been exchanged. Joan was sold by John of Luxembourg to the English for a sum which would amount to several hundred thousand dollars in modern money. There can be no doubt that the English, partly because they feared their prisoner with a superstitious terror, partly because they were ashamed of the dread which she inspired, were determined at all costs to take her life. They could not put her to death for having beaten them, but they could get her sentenced as a witch and a heretic.

Moreover, they had a tool ready to their hand in Pierre Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais, an unscrupulous and ambitious man who was the creature of

the Burgundian party. A pretext for invoking his authority was found in the fact that Compiègne, where Joan was captured, lay in the Diocese of Beauvais. Still, as Beauvais was in the hands of the French, the trial took place at Rouen — the latter see being at that time vacant. This raised many points of technical legality which were summarily settled by the parties interested.

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The Vicar of the Inquisition at first, upon some scruple of jurisdiction, refused to attend, but this difficulty was overcome before the trial ended. Throughout the trial Cauchon's assessors consisted almost entirely of Frenchmen, for the most part theologians and doctors of the University of Paris. Preliminary meetings of the court took place in January, but it was only on 21 February, 1431, that Joan appeared for the first time before her judges. She was not allowed an advocate, and, though accused in an ecclesiastical court, she was throughout illegally confined in the Castle of Rouen, a secular prison, where she was guarded by dissolute English soldiers. Joan bitterly complained of this. She asked to be in the church prison, where she would have had female attendants. It was undoubtedly for the better protection of her modesty under such conditions that she persisted in retaining her male attire. Before she had been handed over to the English, she had attempted to escape by desperately throwing herself from the window of the tower of Beaurevoir, an act of seeming presumption for which she was much browbeaten by her judges. This also served as a pretext for the harshness shown regarding her confinement at Rouen, where she was at first kept in an iron cage, chained by the neck, hands, and feet. On the other hand she was allowed no spiritual privileges — e.g. attendance at Mass — on account of the charge of heresy and the monstrous dress (difformitate habitus) she was wearing.

As regards the official record of the trial, which, so far as the Latin version goes, seems to be preserved entire, we may probably trust its accuracy in all that relates to the questions asked and the answers returned by the prisoner. These answers are in every way favourable to Joan. Her simplicity, piety, and good sense appear at every turn, despite the attempts of the judges to confuse her. They pressed her regarding her visions, but upon many points she refused to answer.

Her attitude was always fearless, and, upon 1 March, Joan boldly announced that

"within seven years' space the English would have to forfeit a bigger prize than Orléans." In point of fact Paris was lost to Henry VI on 12 November, 1437 — six years and eight months afterwards. It was probably because the Maid's answers perceptibly won sympathizers for her in a large assembly that Cauchon decided to conduct the rest of the inquiry before a small committee of judges in the prison itself. We may remark that the only matter in which any charge of prevarication can be reasonably urged against Joan's replies occurs especially in this stage of the inquiry. Joan, pressed about the secret sign given to the king, declared that an angel brought him a golden crown, but on further questioning she seems to have grown confused and to have contradicted herself. Most authorities (like, e.g., M.

Petit de Julleville and Mr. Andrew Lang) are agreed that she was trying to guard the king's secret behind an allegory, she herself being the angel; but others — for instance P. Ayroles and Canon Dunand — insinuate that the accuracy of the procès-viii

verbal cannot be trusted. On another point she was prejudiced by her lack of education. The judges asked her to submit herself to "the Church Militant." Joan clearly did not understand the phrase and, though willing and anxious to appeal to the pope, grew puzzled and confused. It was asserted later that Joan's reluctance to pledge herself to a simple acceptance of the Church's decisions was due to some insidious advice treacherously imparted to her to work her ruin. But the accounts of this alleged perfidy are contradictory and improbable.

The examinations terminated on 17 March. Seventy propositions were then drawn up, forming a very disorderly and unfair presentment of Joan's "crimes,"

but, after she had been permitted to hear and reply to these, another set of twelve were drafted, better arranged and less extravagantly worded. With this summary of her misdeeds before them, a large majority of the twenty-two judges who took part in the deliberations declared Joan's visions and voices to be "false and dia-bolical," and they decided that if she refused to

retract she was to be handed over to the secular arm — which was the same as saying that she was to be burned.

Certain formal admonitions, at first private, and then public, were administered to the poor victim (18 April and 2 May), but she refused to make any submission which the judges could have considered satisfactory. On 9 May she was threatened with torture, but she still held firm. Meanwhile, the twelve propositions were submitted to the University of Paris, which, being extravagantly English in sympathy, denounced the Maid in violent terms. Strong in this approval, the judges, forty-seven in number, held a final deliberation, and forty-two reaffirmed that Joan ought to be declared heretical and handed over to the civil power, if she still refused to retract. Another admonition followed in the prison on 22 May, but Joan remained unshaken. The next day a stake was erected in the cemetery of St-Ouen, and in the presence of a great crowd she was solemnly admonished for the last time. After a courageous protest against the preacher's insulting reflections on her king, Charles VII, the accessories of the scene seem at last to have worked upon mind and body worn out by so many struggles. Her courage for once failed her. She consented to sign some sort of retraction, but what the precise terms of that retraction were will never be known. In the official record of the process a form of retraction is in inserted which is most humiliating in every particular. It is a long document which would have taken half an hour to read. What was read aloud to Joan and was signed by her must have been something quite different, for five witnesses at the rehabilitation trial, including Jean Massieu, the official who had himself read it aloud, declared that it was only a matter of a few lines.

Even so, the poor victim did not sign unconditionally, but plainly declared that she only retracted in so far as it was God's will. However, in virtue of this conces-sion, Joan was not then burned, but conducted back to prison.

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The English and Burgundians were furious, but Cauchon, it seems, placated them by saying, "We shall have her yet." Undoubtedly her position would now, in case of a relapse, be worse than before, for no second retractation could save her from the flames. Moreover, as one of the points upon which she had been condemned was the wearing of male apparel, a resumption of

that attire would alone constitute a relapse into heresy, and this within a few days happened, owing, it was afterwards alleged, to a trap deliberately laid by her jailers with the conniv-ance of Cauchon. Joan, either to defend her modesty from outrage, or because her women's garments were taken from her, or, perhaps, simply because she was weary of the struggle and was convinced that her enemies were determined to have her blood upon some pretext, once more put on the man's dress which had been purposely left in her way. The end now came soon. On 29 May a court of thirty-seven judges decided unanimously that the Maid must be treated as a relapsed heretic, and this sentence was actually carried out the next day (30 May, 1431) amid circumstances of intense pathos. She is said, when the judges visited her early in the morning, first to have charged Cauchon with the responsibility of her death, solemnly appealing from him to God, and afterwards to have declared that "her voices had deceived her." About this last speech a doubt must always be felt. We cannot be sure whether such words were ever used, and, even if they were, the meaning is not plain. She was, however, allowed to make her confession and to receive Communion. Her demeanour at the stake was such as to move even her bitter enemies to tears. She asked for a cross, which, after she had embraced it, was held up before her while she called continuously upon the name of Jesus. "Until the last," said Manchon, the recorder at the trial, "she declared that her voices came from God and had not deceived her." After death her ashes were thrown into the Seine.

Twenty-four years later a revision of her trial, the procès de réhabilitation, was opened at Paris with the consent of the Holy See. The popular feeling was then very different, and, with but the rarest exceptions, all the witnesses were eager to render their tribute to the virtues and supernatural gifts of the Maid. The first trial had been conducted without reference to the pope; indeed it was carried out in defiance of St. Joan's appeal to the head of the Church. Now an appel-late court constituted by the pope, after long inquiry and examination of witnesses, reversed and annulled the sentence pronounced by a local tribunal under Cauchon's presidency. The illegality of the former proceedings was made clear, and it speaks well for the sincerity of this new inquiry that it could not be made without inflicting some degree of reproach upon both the King of France and the Church at large, seeing that so great an injustice had been done and had so long been suffered to

continue unredressed. Even before the rehabilitation trial, keen observers, like Eneas Sylvius Piccolomini (afterwards Pope Pius II), though still in x

doubt as to her mission, had discerned something of the heavenly character of the Maid. In Shakespeare's day she was still regarded in England as a witch in league with the fiends of hell, but a juster estimate had begun to prevail even in the pages of Speed's "History of Great Britaine" (1611). By the beginning of the nineteenth century the sympathy for her even in England was general. Such writers as Southey, Hallam, Sharon Turner, Carlyle, Landor, and, above all, De Quincey greeted the Maid with a tribute of respect which was not surpassed even in her own native land. Among her Catholic fellow-countrymen she had been regarded, even in her lifetime, as Divinely inspired.

THE VOICES THAT INSPIRED JOAN

Joan of Arc attributed her success to the hearing of "voices." Such "voices" led her to do the things that she did and in the way that she did them. Some believe these

"voices" to be divinely inspired visions. But what are the scientific explanations for the "voices" of Joan of Arc?

There are at least 10 medical, psychological or behavioral theories.

Some have argued that Joan of Arc suffered from Meniere's disease. This is an ear problem that can cause dizziness and ear (auditory) confusion, sometimes taking the form of sounds similar to "voices."

Others maintain that Joan of Arc suffered from tinnitus. This is a common inner ear problem resulting in hissing or buzzing sounds in the ear that can on occasion resemble "voices."

Still others contend that Joan of Arc suffered from schizophrenia. Auditory hallucinations are common in schizophrenics.

Another view is that Joan of Arc was a psychopath — and a pretty clever one at that. At her trial, she maintained her wits and poise through tortuous

days of hostile cross-examination by skilled interrogators of the Inquisition. They constantly tried to trap her into an admission of guilt.

Yet another view is that Joan of Arc hallucinated on a form of LSD. This came about accidentally from eating contaminated grain. The fungus ergot grows on grains such as rye (Secale), barley (Hordeum) and wheat (Triticium). Poor stor-age of grain, a common occurrence in the Middle Ages, allowed ergot to thrive.

Ergot was known as "mad grain" and "drunken rye" because of the hallucinations it caused. The psychoactive ingredient in ergot is a form of LSD (lysergic diethy-lamide). LSD would easily account for the "voices."

Yet still another view is that Joan of Arc only pretended to hear "voices."

Supporters of this theory argue that she faked mental illness in order to gain favour from a sympathetic King Charles VII of France. The King's own father suffered from mental illness and was aptly known as "Charles the Mad."

In 1986, Dr. R.H. Ratnasuriya, a psychologist at the Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospital in London, argued in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine that Joan of Arc suffered from a form of tuberculosis that resulted in a tumour (tuberculoma) in the temporal region of her brain. Such a tumour can produce auditory hallucinations, thus explaining her "voices."

In response to this theory, later in 1986 and in the same journal, Dr. D.A.

Moore, with the intriguing title of medical services director of the Scottish and Newcastle Breweries, dismissed the tuberculoma theory and instead offered one of his own. He voiced the view that Joan of Arc's "voices" was only one of several symptoms she exhibited. She also suffered profound ill health due to malnutrition (cachexia) and the absence of menstrual periods (amenorrhoea) also due to malnutrition. Thus, Dr. Moore concluded, Joan of Arc more than likely suffered from anorexia nervosa.

In 1991 in the journal Epilepsia, Drs. E. Foote-Smith and L. Bayne of the Department of Neurology at the University of California in San Francisco presented the theory that Joan of Arc suffered from epilepsy.

They write: “We suggest, based on her own words and the contemporary descriptions of observers, that the source of her visions and convictions was in part ecstatic epileptic auras and that she joins the host of creative religious think-ers suspected or known to have [had] epilepsy, from St. Paul and Mohammed to Dostoevsky, [and] who have changed western civilization.”

The latest theory explaining Joan of Arc’s “voices,” but probably not the last, was put forward in 2004. Writing in the American Journal of Clinical Hypno-sis, Dr. Maggie Phillips, an Oakland, Calif., psychologist and author of Healing the Divided Self (1995) and Finding the Energy to Heal (2000), suggests that Joan of Arc suffered from “post-traumatic fragmentation” associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. This was due to child abuse, parental neglect and other terrifying experiences.

During the Hundred Years War in particular, life ranged from the horrible to the terrible as death, disease, disaster and destruction were everywhere. While the common folk suffered tragically and endlessly, not knowing what the fighting was really all about and never having “victory” clearly defined, their leaders merely repeated for more than 100 years, “Fight on, and on, and on, and on.”

IN a paper entitled “A Medico-psychological Revision of the Story of Jehanne La Pucelle” read before the Section of the History of Medicine of the Royal Society xii

After the painting by Eugène Thirion

JOAN OF ARC HEARS THE VOICES

of Medicine on December 4, Dr. H. P. Bayon said that modern historians, by inter-preting medieval religious conceptions according to the dictates of contemporary critical doctrines, have failed to examine the voices and visions of La Pucelle in their proper light and sequence. The first voices heard at the age of thirteen were, according to him, connected with endocrine activity tinged by intense religious fervour and could not be rightly diagnosed as morbid, even if they ranked as somewhat abnormal.

Then, of course, there is always the possibility that Joan's "voices" were exactly what she claimed them to be.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"The age of Chivalry—alas!—is dead. The days of miracles are past and gone! What future is there for hapless France? She lies in the dust. How can she hope to rise?"

Sir Guy de Laval looked full in our faces as he spoke these words, and what could one reply? Ah me!—those were sad and sorrowful days for France—and for those who thought upon the bygone glories of the past, when she was mistress of herself, held high her head, and was a power with hostile nations. What would the great Charlemagne say, could he see us now? What would even St. Louis of blessed memory feel, could he witness the changes wrought by only a century and a half?

Surely it were enough to cause them to turn in their graves! The north lying supine at the feet of the English conqueror; licking his hand, as a dog licks that of his master, lost to all sense of shame that an English infant in his cradle (so to speak) should rule through a regent the fair realm of France, whilst its own lawful King, banished from his capital and from half his kingdom, should keep his Court at Bourges or Chinon, passing his days in idle revelry, heedless of the eclipse of former greatness, careless of the further aggressions threatened by the ever-encroaching foe.

Was Orleans to fall next into the greedy maw of the English adventurers?

Was it not already threatened? And how could it be saved if nothing could rouse the King from his slothful indifference? O for the days of Chivalry!—the days so long gone by!

Whilst I, Jean de Novelpont, was musing thus, a curious look overshadowed
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the face of Bertrand de Poulengy, our comrade and friend, with whom, when we had said adieu to Sir Guy a few miles farther on, I was to return to Vaucouleurs, to pay a long-promised visit there. I had been journeying awhile with Sir Guy in Germany, and he was on his way to the Court at Chinon; for we were all of the Armagnac party, loyal to our rightful monarch, whether King or only Dauphin still, since he had not been crowned, and had adopted no truly regal state or authority; and we were earnestly desirous of seeing him awaken from his lethargy and put himself at the head of an army, resolved to drive out the invaders from the land, and be King of France in truth as well as in name. But so far it seemed as though

nothing short of a miracle would effect this, and the days of miracles, as Sir Guy had said, were now past and gone.

Then came the voice of Bertrand, speaking in low tones, as a man speaks who communes with himself; but we heard him, for we were riding over the thick moss of the forest glade, and the horses' feet sank deep and noiseless in the sod, and our fellows had fallen far behind, so that their laughter and talk no longer broke upon our ears. The dreamy stillness of the autumn woodlands was about us, when the songs of the birds are hushed, and the light falls golden through the yellowing leaves, and a glory more solemn than that of springtide lies upon the land.

Methinks there is something in the gradual death of the year which attunes our hearts to a certain gentle melancholy; and perchance this was why Sir Guy's words had lacked the ring of hopeful bravery that was natural to one of his temperament, and why Bertrand's eyes were so grave and dreamy, and his voice seemed to come from far away.

"And yet I do bethink me that six months agone I did behold a scene which seems to me to hold within its scope something of miracle and of mystery. I have thought of it by day, and dreamed of it by night, and the memory of it will not leave me, I trow, so long as breath and being remain!"

We turned and looked at him—the pair of us—with eyes which questioned better than our tongues. Bertrand and I had been comrades and friends in boyhood; but of late years we had been much sundered. I had not seen him for above a year, till he joined us the previous Wednesday at Nancy, having received a letter I did send to him from thence. He came to beg of me to visit him at his kinsman's house, the Seigneur Robert de Baudricourt of Vaucouleurs; and since my thirst for travel was assuaged, and my purse something over light to go to Court, I was glad to end my wanderings for the nonce, in the company of one whom I still loved as a brother.

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From the first I had noted that Bertrand was something graver and more thoughtful than had been his wont. Now I did look at him with wonder in my eyes.

What could he be speaking of?

He answered as though the question had passed my lips.

"It was May of this present year of grace," he said, "I mind it the better that it was the Feast of the Ascension, and I had kept fast and vigil, had made my confession and received the Holy Sacrament early in the day. I was in my lodging overlooking the market place, and hard by the Castle which as you know hangs, as it were, over the town, guarding or threatening it, as the case may be, when a messenger arrived from my kinsman, De Baudricourt, bidding me to a council which he was holding at noon that day. I went to him without delay; and he did tell me a strange tale.

"Not long since, so he said, an honest prud'homme of the neighbouring village of Burey le Petit, Durand Laxart by name, had asked speech with him, and had then told him that a young niece of his, dwelling in the village of Domremy, had come to him a few days since, saying it had been revealed to her how that she was to be used by the God of Heaven as an instrument in His hands for the re-demption of France; and she had been told in a vision to go first to the Seigneur de Baudricourt, who would then find means whereby she should be sent to the Dauphin (as she called him), whom she was to cause to be made King of France."

"Mort de Dieu!" cried Sir Guy, as he gazed at Bertrand with a look betwixt laughter and amaze, "and what said your worshipful uncle to that same message?"

"At the first, he told me, he broke into a great laugh, and bid the honest fellow box the girl's ears well, and send her back to her mother. But he

added that the man had been to him once again, and had pleaded that at least he would see his niece before sending her away; and since by this time he was himself somewhat curious to see and to question this village maiden, who came with so strange a tale, he had told Laxart to bring her at noon that very day, and he desired that I and certain others should be there in the hall with him, to hear her story, and perhaps suggest some shrewd question which might help to test her good faith."

"A good thought," spoke Sir Guy, "for it is hard to believe in these dreamers of dreams. I have met such myself—they talk great swelling words, but the world wags on its way in spite of them. They are no prophets; they are bags of wind. They make a stir and a commotion for a brief while, and then they vanish to 3

be heard of no more."

"It may be so," answered Bertrand, whose face was grave, and whose steadfast dark-blue eyes had taken a strange shining, "I can only speak of that which I did see and hear. What the future may hold none can say. God alone doth know that."

"Then you saw this maid—and heard her speech. What looked she like?—

and what said she?"

"I will tell you all the tale. We were gathered there in the great hall. There were perhaps a score of us; the Seigneur at the head of the council table, the Abbe Perigord on his right, and the Count of La Roche on his left. There were two priests also present, and the chiefest knights and gentlemen of the town. We had all been laughing gaily at the thought of what a village maid of but seventeen summers—

or thereabouts—would feel on being introduced into the presence of such a company. We surmised that she would shrink into the very ground for shame. One gentleman declared that it was cruel to ask her to face so many strangers of condition so much more exalted than her own; but De

Baudricourt cried out, 'Why man, the wench is clamouring to be taken to the King at his Court! If she cannot face a score of simple country nobles here, how can she present herself at Chinon? Let her learn her place by a sharp lesson here; so may she understand that she had best return to her distaff and spindle and leave the crowning of Kings to other hands!' And it was in the midst of the roar of laughter which greeted this speech that the door opened slowly—and we saw the maid of whom we had been talking."

"And she doubtless heard your mirth," spoke I, and he bent his head in assent.

"I trow she did," he answered, "but think you that the ribald jests of mortal men can touch one of the angels of God? She stood for a moment framed in the doorway, and I tell you I lie not when I declare that it seemed to all present as though a halo of pure white light encircled her. Where the light came from I know not; but many there were, like myself, who noted it. The far end of the hall was dim and dark; but yet we saw her clear as she moved forward. Upon her face was a shining such as I have seen upon none other. She wore the simple peasant dress of her class, with the coif upon her head; yet it seemed to me—ay, and to others too—as though she was habited in rich apparel. Perchance it was that when one had seen her face, one could no longer think upon her raiment. If a queen—if an angel—if a saint from heaven stood in stately calm and dignity before one's eyes, 4

how could we think of the raiment worn? We should see nothing but the grandeur and beauty of the face and form!"

"Mort de Dieu!" cried Sir Guy with his favourite oath, "but you look, good Bertrand, as though you had gazed upon some vision from the unseen world!"

"Nay," he answered gravely, "but I have looked upon the face of one whom God has visited through His saints. I have seen the reflection of His glory in human eyes; and so I can never say with others that the days of miracles are past."

Bertrand spoke with a solemnity and earnestness which could not but impress us deeply. Our eyes begged him to continue, and he told the rest of his tale very simply.

"She came forward with this strange shining in her eyes. She bent before us with simple reverence; but then lifted herself up to her full height and looked straight at De Baudricourt without boldness and without fear, as though she saw in him a tool in the hand of God, and had no other thought for him besides.

"'Seigneur,' she said, 'my Lord has bidden me come to you, that you may send me to the Dauphin; for He has given me a message to him which none else may bear; and He has told me that you will do it, therefore I know that you will not fail Him, and your laughter troubles me not.'

"'Who is your Lord, my child?' asked De Baudricourt, not laughing now, but pulling at his beard and frowning in perplexity.

"'Even the Lord of Heaven, Sire,' she answered, and her hands clasped themselves loosely together whilst her eyes looked upward with a smile such as I have seen on none other face before. 'He that is my Lord and your Lord and the Lord of this realm of France. But it is His holy will that the Dauphin shall be its King, and that he shall drive back the English, and that the crown shall be set upon his head. And this, with other matters which are for his ear alone I am sent to tell him; and you, good my lord, are he who shall send me to my King.'

"Thus she spoke, and looked at us all with those shining eyes of hers; yet it seemed to me she scarce saw us. Her glance did go beyond, as though she were gazing in vision upon the things which were to be."

"She was beautiful, you say?" asked Sir Guy, whose interest was keenly aroused; but who, I saw, was doubtful whether Bertrand had not been deceived 5

by some witchery of fair face and graceful form; for Bertrand, albeit a man of thews and sinews and bold as a lion in fight, was something of the dreamer too, as warriors in all ages have sometimes been.

"Yes—as an angel of God is beautiful," he answered, "ask me not of that; for I can tell you nothing. I know not the hue of her hair or of her eyes, nor what her face was like, nor her form, save that she was tall and very slender; but beautiful—ah yes!—with the beauty which this world cannot give; a beauty which silenced every flippant jest, shamed every scoffing thought, turned ridicule into wonder, contempt into reverence. Whether this wonderful maiden came in truth as a messenger of God or no, at least not one present but saw well that she herself believed heart and soul in her divine commission."

"And what answer did the Seigneur de Baudricourt make to her?"

"He gazed upon her full for awhile, and then he suddenly asked of her,

'And when shall all these wonders come to pass?'

"She, with her gaze fixed still a little upwards, answered, 'Before mid-Lent next year shall succour reach him; then will the city of Orleans be in sore straight; but help shall come, and the English shall fly before the sword of the Lord. Afterwards shall the Dauphin receive consecration at Rheims, and the crown of France shall be set upon his head, in token that he is the anointed of the Lord.'

"'And who has told you all this, my child?' asked De Baudricourt then, answering gently, as one speaks within a church.

"'Mes voix,' she answered, speaking as one who dreams, and in dreaming listens.

"'What voices?' asked De Baudricourt, 'and have you naught but voices to instruct you in such great matters?'

"'Yes, Sire,' she answered softly, 'I have seen the great Archangel Michael, his sword drawn in his hand; and I know that he has drawn it for the deliverance of France, and that though he has chosen so humble an

instrument as myself, yet that to him and to the Lord of Heaven will be the victory and the glory.'

"When she had thus spoken there was a great silence in the hall, in which might have been heard the fall of a pin, and I vow that whether it were trick of summer sunshine or no, the light about the maiden seemed to grow brighter and 6

brighter. Her face was just slightly uplifted as one who listens, and upon her lips there was a smile.

"'And I know that you will send me to the Dauphin, Robert de Baudricourt,'

she suddenly said, 'because my voices tell me so.'

"We all looked at De Baudricourt, who sat chin on hand, gazing at the maiden as though he would read her very soul. We waited, wondering, for him to speak At last he did.

"'Well, my girl, I will think of all this. We have till next year, by your own showing, ere these great things shall come to pass. So get you home, and see what your father and mother say to all this, and whether the Archangel Michael comes again or no. Go home—be a good girl, and we will see what we will see.'"

"Was that all he promised?" spoke Sir Guy with a short laugh. "I trow the maiden dreamer would not thank him for that word! A deliverer of princes to be bidden to go home and be a good girl! What said she to that counsel?"

"Ay, well you may ask," spoke Bertrand with subdued emotion. "Just such a question sprang to my lips as I heard my kinsman's answer. I looked to see her face fall, to see sparks of anger flash from her eyes, or a great disappointment cloud the serene beauty of her countenance. But instead of this a wonderful smile lighted it, and her sweet and resonant voice sounded clear through the hall.

"'Ah, now Seigneur, I know you for a good and true man! You speak as did my voices when first I heard them. "Jeanne, sois bonne et sage enfant; va souvent a l'eglise"; that was their first message to me, when I was but a child; and now you say the same to me—be a good girl. Thus I know that your heart is right, and that when my Lord's time is come you will send me with His message to the Dauphin.'

"And so saying she bent again in a modest reverence before us. Yet let me tell you that as she did so, every man of us sprang to his feet by an impulse which each one felt, yet none could explain. As one man we rose, and bowed before her, as she retired from the hail with the simple, stately grace of a young queen.

Not till the door had closed behind her did we bethink us that it was to a humble peasant girl we had paid unconscious homage. We who had thought she would well-nigh sink to the dust at sight of us, had been made to feel that we were in the presence of royalty!"

"Tu Dieu! but that is a strange story!" quoth Sir Guy with knitted brows.

7

A MISSION FROM GOD

"For many a long day I have heard nought so strange! What think you of it yourself, good Bertrand? For by my troth you speak like a man convinced that a miracle may even yet be wrought for France at the hand of this maid."

"And if I do, is that so strange? Cannot it be that the good God may still speak through His saints to the sons of men, and may raise up a deliverer for us, even as He did in the days of old for His chosen people? Is His arm shortened at all? And is it meet that we Christian knights should trust Him less than did the Jews of old?"

Sir Guy made no reply, but fell into thought, and then asked a sudden question:

"Who is this peasant maid of whom you speak? And where is she now? Is she still abiding content at home, awaiting the time appointed by her visions?"

"I trow that she is," answered Bertrand. "I did hear that she went home without delay, as quietly as she had come. Her name is Jeanne d'Arc. She dwells in the village of Domremy over yonder. Her father is an honest prud'homme of the place. She has brothers and a sister. She is known in the village as a pious and gentle maid, ever ready to tend the sick, hold vigil for the dead, take charge of an ailing child, or do any such simple service for the neighbours. She is beloved of all, full of piety and good works, constant in attendance at church, regular in her confession and at mass. So much have I heard from her kinsman Laxart, though for mine own part I have not seen her again."

"And what thinks De Baudricourt of her mission? Does he ever speak of it?"

"Not often; and yet I know that he has not forgotten it. For ofttimes he does sink into a deep reverie; and disjointed words break from him, which tell me whither his thoughts have flown.

“At the first he did say to me, ‘Let the girl go home; let us see if we hear more of her. If this be but a phantasy on her part; if she has been fasting and praying and dreaming, till she knows not what is true and what is her own imagining, why, time will cure her of her fancies and follies. If otherwise—well, we will see when the time comes. To act in haste were to act with folly.’

“And so he dismissed the matter, though, as I say, he doth not forget it, and I think never a day comes but he thinks on it.”

8

A MISSION FROM GOD

"And while the Lord waits, the English are active!" cried Sir Guy with a note of impatience in his voice. "They are already threatening Orleans. Soon they will march in strength upon it. And if that city once fall, why what hope is there even for such remnants of his kingdom as still remain faithful south of the Loire? The English will have them all. Already they call our King in mockery 'the King of Bourges;' soon even that small domain will be reft away, and then what will remain for him or for us? If the visions of the maiden had been true, why doth not the Lord strike now, before Salisbury of England can invest the city? If Orleans fall, all is lost!"

"But Jeanne says that Orleans shall be saved," spoke Bertrand in a low voice,

"and if she speaks sooth, must not she and we alike leave the times and seasons in the hand of the Lord?"

Sir Guy shrugged his shoulders, and gave me a shrewd glance, the meaning of which I was at no loss to understand. He thought that Bertrand's head had been something turned, and that he had become a visionary, looking rather for a miracle from heaven than for deliverance from the foe through hard fighting by loyal men marching under the banner of their King. Truth we all knew well that little short of a miracle would arouse the indolent and discouraged Charles, cowed by the English foe, doubtful of his own right to call himself Dauphin, distrustful of his friends, despairing of winning the love or trust of his subjects. But could it indeed be possible that such a miracle could be wrought, and by an instrument so humble as a village maid —this Jeanne d'Arc?

But the time had come when we must say adieu to our comrade, and turn ourselves back to Vaucouleurs, if we were not to be benighted in the forest ere we could reach that place. We halted for our serving men to come up; and as we did so Bertrand said in a low voice to Sir Guy:

“I pray you, Seigneur de Laval, speak no word to His Majesty of this maid and her mission, until such time as news may reach him of her from other sources.”

“I will say no word,” answered the other, smiling, and so with many friendly words we parted, and Bertrand and I, with one servant behind us, turned our horses’ heads back along the road by which we had come.

“Bertrand,” I said, as the shadows lengthened, the soft dusk fell in the forest, and the witchery of the evening hour fell upon my heart, “I would that I could see this maiden of whom you speak, this Jeanne d’Arc of the village of Domremy.”

9

A MISSION FROM GOD

He turned and looked me full in the face; I saw his eyes glow and the colour deepen in his cheeks.

"You would not go to mock, friend Jean de Metz?" he said, for so I am generally named amongst my friends.

"Nay," I answered truthfully, "there is no thought of mockery in my heart; yet I fain would see the Maid."

He paused awhile in thought and then made answer:

"At least we may ride together one day to Domremy; but whether or no we see the Maid will be according to the will of Heaven."

I did not forget my desire to see this maiden of Domremy, nor did Bertrand, I trow, forget the promise, albeit some days passed by ere we put our plan into action.

Bad news kept coming in to the little loyal township of Vaucouleurs. There was no manner of doubt but that the English Regent, Bedford, was resolved to lose no more time, but seek to put beneath his iron heel the whole of the realm of France. Gascony had been English so long that the people could remember nothing different than the rule of the Roy Outremer—as of old they called him. Now all France north of the Loire owned the same sway, and as all men know, the Duke of Burgundy was ally to the English, and hated the Dauphin with a deadly hatred, for the murder of his father—for which no man can justly blame him. True, his love for the English had cooled manifestly since that affair of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester and Jacquelaine of Brabant, in which as was natural, he took the part of his brother; but although the Duke of Bedford was highly indignant with Duke Humphrey, and gave him no manner of support in his rash expedition, yet the Duke of Burgundy resented upon the English what had been done, and although it did not drive him into the arms of the Dauphin, whom he hated

worse, it loosened the bond between him and our foes, and we had hoped it might bring about a better state of things for our party. Yet alas!—this seemed as far as ever from being so; and the Burgundian soldiers still ravaged along our borders, and it seemed ofttimes as though we little loyal community of the Duchy of Bar would be swallowed up altogether betwixt the two encroaching foes. So our hearts were often heavy and our faces grave with fear.

I noted in the manner of the Governor, whose guest I had now become, a great gravity, which in old days had not been there; for Robert de Baudricourt, as 10

I remembered him, had ever been a man of merry mood, with a great laugh, a ready jest, and that sort of rough, bluff courage that makes light of trouble and peril.

Now, however, we often saw him sunk in some deep reverie, his chin upon his hand, his eyes gazing full into the blaze of the leaping fire of logs, which always flamed upon the hearth in the great hall, where the most part of his time was spent. He would go hunting or hawking by day, or ride hither and thither through the town, looking into matters there, or sit to listen to the affairs of the citizens or soldiers as they were brought before him; and at such times his manner would be much as it had ever been of yore—quick, almost rough, yet not unkindly—whilst the shrewd justice he always meted out won the respect of the people, and made him a favourite in the town.

But when the evening fell, and the day's work was done, and after supper we sat in the hall, with the dogs slumbering around us, talking of any news which might have come in, either of raids by the roving Burgundians, or the advance of the English towards Orleans, then these darker moods would fall upon him; and once when he had sat for well-nigh an hour without moving, his brow drawn and furrowed, and his eyes seemingly sunk deeper in his head, Bertrand leaned towards me and whispered in mine ear:

"He is thinking of the Maid of Domremy!"

De Baudricourt could not have heard the words, yet when he spoke a brief while later, it almost seemed as though he might have done so.

“Nephew,” he said, lifting his head abruptly and gazing across at us, “tell me again the words of that prophecy of Merlin’s, spoken long, long ago, of which men whisper in these days, and of which you did speak to me awhile back.”

“Marry, good mine uncle, the prophecy runs thus,” answered Bertrand, rising and crossing over towards the great fire before which his kinsman sat, “‘That France should be destroyed by the wiles of a woman, and saved and redeemed by a maiden.’”

The bushy brows met in a fierce scowl over the burning eyes; his words came in a great burst of indignation and scorn.

“Ay, truly—he spake truly—the wise man—the wizard! A woman to be the ruin of the kingdom! Ay, verily, and has it not been so? Who but that wicked Queen 11

A MISSION FROM GOD

Isabeau is at the bottom of the disgraceful Treaty of Troyes, wherein France sold herself into the hands of the English? Did she not repudiate her own son? Did not her hatred burn so fiercely against him that she was ready to tarnish her own good fame and declare him illegitimate, rather than that he should succeed his father as King of France? Did she not give her daughter to the English King in wedlock, that their child might reign over this fair realm? Truly has the kingdom been destroyed by the wiles of a woman! But I vow it will take more than the strength of any maiden to save and redeem it from the woes beneath which it lies crushed!”

“In sooth it doth seem so,” answered Bertrand with grave and earnest countenance, “but yet with the good God nothing is impossible. Hath He not said before this that He doth take of the mean and humble to confound the great of the earth? Did not the three hundred with Gideon overcome the hosts of the Moabites?

Did not the cake of barley bread overturn the tent and the camp of the foe?"

"Ay, if the good God will arise to work miracles again, such things might be; but how can we look for Him to do so? What manner of man is the Dauphin of France that he should look for divine deliverance? 'God helps those who help themselves,' so says the proverb; but what of those who lie sunk in lethargy or despair, and seek to drown thought or care in folly and riotous living—heedless of the ruin of the realm?"

"There is another proverb, good mine uncle, that tells how man's extremity is God's opportunity," quoth Bertrand thoughtfully; "if we did judge of God's mercy by man's worthiness to receive the same, we might well sink in despair.

But His power and His goodness are not limited by our infirmities, and therein alone lies our hope."

De Baudricourt uttered a sound between a snort and a grunt. I knew not what he thought of Bertrand's answer; but that brief dialogue aroused within me afresh the desire I had before expressed to see the maid, Jeanne of Domremy; and as the sun upon the morrow shone out bright and clear, after a week of heavy rain storms, we agreed that no better opportunity could we hope for to ride across to the little village, and try whether it were possible to obtain speech with the young girl about whom such interest had been aroused in some breasts.

We spoke no word to De Baudricourt of our intention. Bertrand knew from his manner that he was thinking more and more earnestly of that declaration on the part of the village maiden that her Lord—the King of Heaven—had revealed to her that she must be sent to the Dauphin, to help him to drive out the English from his country, and to place the crown of France upon his head, and that he, Robert 12

A MISSION FROM GOD

de Baudricourt, was the instrument who would be used to speed her on her way.

Bertrand knew that this thought was weighing upon the mind of his kinsman, and the more so as the time for the fulfilment of the prophecy drew nearer.

Autumn had come. Winter was hard at hand; and before Mid-Lent the promised succour to France was to arrive through the means of this maiden —this Jeanne d'Arc.

"He is waiting and watching," spoke Bertrand, as we rode through the forest, the thinning leaves of which allowed the sunlight to play merrily upon our path. "He says in his heart that if this thing be of God, the Maid will come again when the time draws near; but that if it is phantasy, or if she be deluded of the Devil, perchance his backwardness will put a check upon her ardour, and we shall hear no more of it. The Abbe Perigord, his Confessor, has bidden him beware lest it be a snare of the Evil One"—and as he spoke these words Bertrand crossed himself, and I did the like, for the forest is an ill place in which to talk of the Devil, as all men know.

"But for my part, when I think upon her words, and see again the look of her young face, I cannot believe that she has been thus deceived; albeit we are told that the Devil can make himself appear as an angel of light."

This was the puzzle, of course. But surely the Church had power to discern betwixt the wiles of the Evil One and the finger of God. There were words and signs which any possessed of the Devil must needs fly before. I could not think that the Church need fear deception, even though a village maid might be deceived.

The forest was very beautiful that day, albeit travelling was something slow, owing to the softness of the ground, and the swollen condition of the brooks, which often forced us to go round by the bridges instead of taking the fords; so that we halted a few miles from Domremy to bait our horses and to appease our own hunger, for by that time our appetite was sharp set.

It was there, as we sat at table, and talked with mine host, that we heard somewhat more of this Maid, whom we had started forth in hopes to see.

Bertrand was known for the kinsman of De Baudricourt and all the countryside knew well the tale, how that Jeanne d'Arc had gone to him in the springtide of the year, demanding an escort to the Dauphin King of France, for whom she had a message from the King of Heaven, and whom she was to set upon his throne.

13

A MISSION FROM GOD

"When she came home again, having accomplished nothing," spoke the innkeeper, leaning his hands upon the table and greatly enjoying the sound of his own voice, "all the village made great mock of her! They called her the King's Marshal, the Little Queen, Jeanne the Prophetess, and I know not what beside.

Her father was right wroth with her. Long ago he had a dream about her, which troubled him somewhat, as he seemed to see his daughter in the midst of fighting men, leading them on to battle."

"Did he dream that? Surely that is something strange for the vision of a village prud'homme anent his little daughter."

"Ay truly, though at the time he thought little of it, but when all this came to pass he recalled it again; and he smote Jeanne upon the ear with his open hand, and bid her return to her needle and her household tasks, and think no more of matters too great for her. Moreover, he declared that if ever she were to disgrace herself by mingling with men-at-arms, he would call upon her brothers to drown her, and if they disobeyed him, he would take and do it with his own hands!"

"A Spartan father, truly!" murmured Bertrand.

"O ay—but he is a very honest man, is Jacques d'Arc; and he was very wroth at all the talk about his daughter, and he vowed she should wed an honest man, as she is now of age to do, and so forget her dreams and her visions, and take care of her house and her husband and the children the good God should send them—like other wedded wives."

"Then has she indeed wedded?" asked Bertrand earnestly.

"Ah, that is another story!" answered our host, wagging his head and spreading out his hands. "It would take too long were I to tell you all,

messires; but so much will I tell. They did find a man who had long desired the pretty Jeanne for his wife, and he did forswear himself and vow that he had been betrothed to Jeanne with her own free will and consent, and that now he claimed her as his wife. Jeanne, whose courage is high, though she be so quiet and modest in her daily life, did vehemently deny the charge, whereupon the angry father and his friend, the claimant of her hand, did bring it into the court, and the Maid had to defend herself there from the accusation of broken faith. But by St. Michael and all his angels!—how she did confound them all! She asked no help from lawyers, though one did offer himself to her. She called no witnesses herself; but she questioned the witnesses brought against her, and also the man who would fain have 14

become her lord, and out of their own mouths did she convict them of lying and hypocrisy and conspiracy, so that she was triumphantly acquitted, and her judges called her a most wonderful child, and told her mother to be proud of such a daughter!"

I saw a flush rise to Bertrand's cheek, a flush as of pride and joy. And indeed, I myself rejoiced to hear the end of the tale; for it did seem as though this maiden had been persecuted with rancour and injustice, and that is a thing which no man can quietly endure to hear or see.

"And how have they of Domremy behaved themselves to her since?" I asked; and Bertrand listened eagerly for the answer.

"Oh, they have taken her to favour once more; her father has been kind again; her mother ever loved Jeanne much, for her gentleness and beauty and helpfulness at home. All the people love her, when not stirred to mockery by such fine pretensions. If she will remain quietly at home like a wise and discreet maiden, no one will long remember against her her foolish words and dreams."

As we rode through the fields and woodlands towards Domremy, the light began to take the golden hue which it does upon the autumn afternoon, and upon that day it shone with a wonderful radiance such as is not uncommon after rain.

We were later than we had meant, but there would be a moon to light us when the sun sank, and both we and our horses knew the roads well; or we could even sleep, if we were so minded, at the auberge where we had dined. So we were in no haste or hurry. We picked our way leisurely towards the village, and Bertrand told me of the Fairy Well and the Fairy Tree in the forest hard by, so beloved of the children of Domremy, and of which so much has been heard of late, though at that time I knew nothing of any such things.

But fairy lore has ever a charm for me, and I bid him show me these same things. So we turned a little aside into the forest, and found ourselves in a lovely glade, where the light shone so soft and golden, and where the songs of the birds sounded so sweet and melodious, that I felt as though we were stepping through an enchanted world, and well could I believe that the fairies danced around the well, sunk deep in its mossy dell, and fringed about with ferns and flowers and the shade of drooping trees.

But fairies there were none visible to our eyes, and we moved softly onwards towards the spreading tree hard by. But ere we reached it, we both drew rein as by a common impulse, for we had seen a sight which arrested and held us 15

spellbound, ay, and more than that, for the wonder and amaze of it fell also upon the horses we bestrode. For scarcely had we drawn rein, before they both began to tremble and to sweat, and stood with their forefeet planted, their necks out-stretched, their nostrils distended; uttering short, gasping, snorting sounds, as a horse will do when overcome by some terror. But for all this they were as rigid as if they had been carved in stone.

And now, what did we see? Let me try and tell, so far as my poor words may avail. Beneath a spreading tree just a stone's throw to the right of where we stood, and with nothing between to hinder our view of her, a peasant maiden, dressed in the white coif, red skirt, and jacket and kerchief of her class, had been bending over some fine embroidery which she held in her hands. We just caught a glimpse of her thus before the strange thing

happened which caused us to stop short, as though some power from without restrained us.

Hard by, as I know now, stood the village, shut out from view by the trees, with its little church, and the homestead of Jacques d'Arc nestling almost within its shadow. At the moment of which I speak the bell rang forth for the Angelus, with a full, sweet tone of silvery melody; and at the very same instant the work dropped from the girl's hands, and she sank upon her knees. At the first moment, although instinctively, we reined back our horses and uncovered our heads, I had no thought but that she was a devout maiden following the office of the Church out here in the wood. But as she turned her upraised face a little towards us, I saw upon it such a look as I have never seen on human countenance before, nor have ever seen (save upon hers) since. A light seemed to shine either from it or upon it—how can I tell which?—a light so pure and heavenly that no words can fully describe it, but which seemed like the radiance of heaven itself. Her eyes were raised towards the sky, her lips parted, and through the breathless hush of silence which had fallen upon the wood, we heard the soft, sweet tones of her voice.

"Speak, my Lord—Thy servant heareth!"

It was then that our horses showed the signs of terror of which I have before spoken. For myself, I saw nothing save the shining face of the Maid—I knew who it was—there was no need for Bertrand's breathless whisper—"It is she—herself!"—

I knew it in my heart before.

She knelt there amid the fallen leaves, her face raised, her lips parted, her eyes shining as surely never human eyes have shone before. A deep strange hush had fallen over all nature, broken only by the gentle music of the bell. The ruddy gold light of approaching sunset bathed all the wood in glory, and the rays fell 16

upon the kneeling figure, forming a halo of glory round it. But she did not heed, she did not see. She was as one in a trance, insensible to outward

vision. Once and again her lips moved, but we heard no word proceed from them, only the rapt look upon her face increased in intensity, and once I thought (for I could not turn my gaze away) that I saw the gleam of tears in her eyes.

The bell ceased as we stood thus motionless, and as the last note vibrated through the still air, a change came over the Maid. Her head drooped, she hid her face in her hands, and thus she knelt as one absorbed in an intensity of prayer.

Even as this happened, the peculiar glory of the sunlight seemed to change. It shone still, but without such wonderful glow, and our horses at the same time ceased their trembling and their rigid stillness of pose. They shook their heads and jingled their bits, as though striving to throw off some terrifying impression.

"Let us withdraw from her sight," whispered Bertrand touching my arm, and very willingly I acceded to this suggestion, and we silently pressed into the shadow of some great oaks, which stood hard by, the trunks of which hid us well from view. It seemed almost like a species of sacrilege to stand there watching the Maid at her prayers, and yet I vow, that until the bell ceased we had no more power to move than our horses. Why we were holden by this strange spell I know not. I can only speak the truth. We saw nothing and we heard nothing of any miraculous kind, and yet we were like men in a dream, bound hand and foot by invisible bonds, a witness of something unseen to ourselves, which we saw was visible to another.

Beneath the deep shadow of the oaks we looked back. The Maid had risen to her feet by this time, and was stooping to pick up her fallen work. That done, she stood awhile in deep thought, her face turned towards the little church, whence the bell had only just ceased to sound.

I saw her clearly then—a maiden slim and tall, so slender that the rather clumsy peasant dress she wore could not give breadth or awkwardness to her lithe figure. The coif had slipped a little out of place, and some tresses of waving hair had escaped from beneath it, tresses that looked dark till the sun touched them, and then glowed like burnished gold. Her face was pale, with features in no way marked, but so sweet and serene was the expression of

the face, so wonderful was the depth of the great dark eyes, that one was lost in admiration of her beauty, albeit unable to define wherein that beauty lay.

When we started forth, I had meant to try and seek speech with this Jeanne —

this Maid of Domremy—and to ask her of her mission, and whether she were still 17

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believing that she would have power to carry it out; but this purpose now died within me.

How could I dare question such a being as to her visions? Had I not seen how she was visited by sound or sight not sensible to those around her? Had I not in some sort been witness to a miracle? Was it for us to approach and ask of her what had been thus revealed? No!—a thousand times no! If the good God had given her a message, she would know when and where to deliver it. She had spoken before of her voices. Let them instruct her. Let not men seek to interfere. And so we remained where we were, hidden in the deep shadows, whilst Jeanne, with bent head and lingering, graceful steps, utterly unconscious of the eyes that watched her, went slowly out of sight along the glade leading towards the village and her home.

Only when she had disappeared did we venture to move on in her wake, and so passed by the low-browed house, set in its well-tended little garden, where the d'Arc family lived. It lay close to the church, and bore a look of pleasant home-like comfort. We saw Jeanne bending tenderly over a chair, in which reclined the bent form of a little crippled sister. We even heard the soft, sweet voice of the Maid, as she answered some question asked her from within the open door. Then she lifted the bent form in her arms, and I did note how strong that slim frame must be, for the burden seemed as nothing to her as she bore it within the house; and then she disappeared from view, and we rode onwards together.

"There, my friend," spoke Bertrand at last, "I have kept my promise, you have seen the Maid."

"Yes," I answered gravely, "I have seen the Maid," and after that we spoke no word for many a mile.

It may yet be remembered by some how early the snow came that year, to the eastern portion of France at least. I think scarce a week had passed since our journey to Domremy, before a wild gale from the northeast brought heavy snow, which lay white upon the ground for many long weeks, and grew deeper and deeper as more fell, till the wolves ravaged right up to the very walls of Vaucouleurs, and some of the country villages were quite cut off from intercourse with the world.

Thus it came about that I was shut up in Vaucouleurs with my good comrade and friend Bertrand, in the Castle of which Robert de Baudricourt was governor, and for awhile little news reached us from the outside world, though such 18

news as did penetrate to our solitude was all of disaster for the arms of France.

We never spoke to De Baudricourt of our expedition to Domremy, nor told him that we had seen the Maid again. Yet methinks not a day passed without our thinking of her, recalling something of that wonderful look we had seen upon her face, and asking in our hearts whether indeed she were truly visited by heavenly visions sent by God, and whether she indeed heard voices which could reach no ears but hers.

I observed that Bertrand was more regular in attendance at the services of the Church, and especially at Mass, than was usual with young knights in those days, and for my part, I felt a stronger desire after such spiritual aids than I ever remember to have done in my life before. It became a regular thing with us to attend the early Mass in the little chapel of the Castle; and, instead of growing lax (as I had done before many times in my roving life), as to attending confession and receiving the Holy Sacrament, I now began to feel the need for both, as though I were preparing me for some great and solemn undertaking. I cannot well express in words the feeling which possessed me—ay, and Bertrand too—for we began to speak of the matter

one with another—but it seemed to us both as though a high and holy task lay before us, for which we must needs prepare ourselves with fasting and prayer; I wondered if, perhaps, it was thus that knights and men in days of old felt when they had taken the Red Cross, and had pledged themselves to some Crusade in the East.

Well, thus matters went on, quietly enough outwardly, till the Feast of the Nativity had come and gone, and with that feast came a wonderful change in the weather. The frost yielded, the south wind blew soft, the snow melted away one scarce knew how, and a breath of spring seemed already in the air, though we did not dare to hope that winter was gone for good and all.

It was just when the year had turned that we heard a rumour in the town, and it was in this wise that it reached our ears. De Baudricourt had been out with his dogs, chasing away the wolves back into their forest lairs. He had left us some business to attend to for him within the Castle, else should we doubtless have been of the party. But he was the most sagacious huntsman of the district, and a rare day's sport they did have, killing more than a score of wolves, to the great joy of the townsfolk and of the country people without the walls. It was dark ere he got home, and he came in covered with mud from head to foot; the dogs, too, were so plastered over, that they had to be given to the servants to clean ere they could take their wonted places beside the fire; and some of the poor beasts had ugly wounds which needed to be washed and dressed.

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But what struck us most was that De Baudricourt, albeit so successful in his hunt, seemed little pleased with his day's work. His face was dark, as though a thunder cloud lay athwart it, and he gave but curt answers to our questions, as he stood steaming before the fire and quaffing a great tankard of spiced wine which was brought to him. Then he betook himself to his own chamber to get him dry garments, and when he came down supper was already served. He sat him down at the head of the table, still silent and morose; and though he fell with right good will upon the viands, he scarce opened his lips the while, and we in our turn grew silent, for we feared that he had heard the news of some disaster to the French arms, which he was brooding over in silent gloom.

But when the retainers and men-at-arms had disappeared, and we had gathered round the fire at the far end of the hall, as was our wont, then he suddenly began to speak.

"Went ye into the town today?" he suddenly asked of us.

We answered him, Nay, that we had been occupied all day within the Castle over the services there he had left us to perform.

"And have you heard nought of the commotion going on there?"

"We have heard nought. Pray what hath befallen, good sir? Is it some disaster? Hath Orleans fallen into the hands of the English?"

For that was the great fear possessing all loyal minds at this period.

"Nay, it is nought so bad as that," answered De Baudricourt, "and yet it is bad enough, I trow. That mad girl from Domremy is now in the town, telling all men that Robert de Baudricourt hath been appointed of God to send her to the Dauphin at Chinon, and that she must needs start thither soon, to do the work appointed her of heaven.

“Dents de Dieu!—the folly of it is enough to raise the hair on one’s head!

Send a little paysanne to the King with a wild story like hers! ’Tis enough to make the name of De Baudricourt the laughingstock of the whole country!”

I felt a great throb at heart when I heard these words. Then the Maid had not forgot! This time of waiting had not bred either indifference or doubt. The time appointed was drawing near, and she had come to Vaucouleurs once more, 20

to do that which was required of her!

O, was it not wonderful? Must not it be of heaven, this thing? And should we seek to put the message aside as a thing of nought?

Bertrand was already speaking eagerly with his kinsman; but it seemed as though his words did only serve to irritate the Governor the more. In my heart I was sure that had he been certain the Maid was an impostor, he would have been in no wise troubled or disturbed, but would have contented himself by sharply ordering her to leave the town and return home and trouble him no more. It was because he was torn by doubts as to her mission that he was thus perturbed in spirit. He dared not treat her in this summary fashion, lest haply he should be found to be fighting against God; and yet he found it hard to believe that any deliverance for hapless France could come through the hands of a simple, unlettered peasant girl; and he shrank with a strong man’s dislike from making himself in any sort an object of ridicule, or of seeming to give credence to a wild tale of visions and voices, such as the world would laugh to scorn. So he was filled with doubt and perplexity, and this betrayed itself in gloomy looks and in harsh speech.

“Tush, boy! You are but an idle dreamer. I saw before that you were fooled by a pretty face and a silvery voice. Go to!—your words are but phantasy! Who believes in miracles now?”

“If we believe in the power of the good God, shall we not also believe that He can work even miracles at His holy will?”

“Poof—miracles!—the dreams of a vain and silly girl!” scoffed De Baudricourt, “I am sick of her name already!”

Then he suddenly turned upon me and spoke.

“Jean de Metz, you are a knight of parts. You have sense and discretion above your years, and are no featherhead like Bertrand here. Will you undertake a mission from me to this maiden? Ask of her the story of her pretended mission.

Seek to discover from her whether she be speaking truth, or whether she be seeking to deceive. Catch her in her speech if it may be. See whether the tale she tells hang together, and then come and report to me. If she be a mad woman, why should I be troubled with her? She cannot go to the Dauphin yet, come what may.

The melting snows have laid the valleys under water, the roads are impassable; horses would stick fast in the mire, and we are not at the end of winter yet. She must needs wait awhile, whatever her message may be, but I would have you get 21

speech of her, and straightly question her from me. Then if it seem well, I can see her again; but if you be willing, you shall do so first.”

I was more than willing. I was rejoiced to have this occasion for getting speech with the Maid. I spoke no word of having had sight of her already, but fell in with De Baudricourt’s wish that I should go to her as if a mere passing stranger, and only afterwards reveal myself as his emissary. I slept but little all that night, making plans as to all that I should speak when I saw her on the morrow, and, rising early, I betook myself to Mass, not to the private chapel of the Castle, but to one of the churches in the town, though I could not have said why it was that I was moved to do this.

Yet as I knelt in my place I knew, for there amongst the worshippers, her face upraised and full of holy joy, her eyes alight with the depth of her devotion, her hands clasped in an ecstasy of prayer, was the Maid herself;

and I found it hard to turn my eyes from her wonderful face, to think upon the office as it was recited by the priest.

I did not seek speech of her then, for she tarried long in the church over her prayers. I felt at last like one espying on another, and so I came away. But after breakfast, as the sun shone forth and began to light up the narrow streets of the little town, I sallied forth again alone, and asked of the first citizen I met where could be found the dwelling place of one Jeanne d'Arc, from Domremy, who was paying a visit to the town.

I had scarce need to say so much as this. It seemed that all the people in the town had heard of the arrival of the Maid. I know not whether they believed in her mission, or whether they scoffed at it; but at least it was the talk of the place how she had come before, and fearlessly faced the Governor and his council, and had made her great demand from him, and how she had come once again, now that the year was born and Lent approaching, in the which she had said she must seek and find the Dauphin. Thus the man was able at once to give me the information I asked, and told me that the girl was lodging with Henri Leroyer the saddler, and Catherine his wife, naming the street where they dwelt, but adding that I should have no trouble in finding the house, for the people flocked to it to get a sight of the Maid, and to ask her questions concerning her mission hither, and what she thought she was about to accomplish.

And truly I did find that this honest citizen had spoken the truth, for as I turned into the narrow street where Leroyer lived, I saw quite a concourse of people gathered about the house, and though they made way for me to approach, know-22

ing that I was from the Castle, I saw that they were very eager to get sight or speech of the Maid, who was standing at the open door of the shop, and speaking in an earnest fashion to those nearest her.

I made as though I were a passing stranger, who had just heard somewhat of her matter from the bystanders, and I addressed her in friendly fashion, rather as one who laughs.

“What are you doing here, ma mie? And what is this I hear? Is it not written in the book of fate that the King or Dauphin of France must be overcome of England’s King, and that we must all become English, or else be driven into the sea, or banished from the realm?”

Then for the first time her wonderful eyes fastened themselves on my face, and I felt as though my very soul were being read.

“Nay, sire,” she answered, and there was something so flute-like and penetrating in her tones that they seemed to sink into my very soul, “but the Lord of Heaven Himself is about to fight for France, and He has sent me to the Governor here, who will direct me to the Dauphin, who knows nothing of me as yet. But I am to bring him help, and that by Mid-Lent. So I pray you, gentle knight, go tell Robert de Baudricourt that he must needs bestir himself in this business, for my voices tell me that the hour is at hand when, come what may, I must to Chinon, even though I wear my legs to the knees in going thither.”

“Why should I tell this to the Seigneur de Baudricourt?” I asked, marvelling at her words and the fashion of her speech.

“Because he has sent you to me,” she answered, her eyes still on my face,

“and I thank him for having chosen so gracious a messenger; for you have a good heart, and you are no mocker of the things my Lord has revealed to me; and you will be one of those to do His will, and to bring me safely to the Dauphin.”

Half confounded by her words I asked:

“Who is your Lord?”

“It is God,” she answered, and bent her head in lowly reverence.

And then I did a strange thing; but it seemed to be forced upon me from above by a power which I could not withstand. I fell suddenly to my knees before 23

her, and put up my clasped hands, as we do when we pay homage for our lands and honours to our liege lord. And, I speak truth, and nought else, the Maid put her hands over mine just as our lord or sovereign should do, and though I dare swear she had never heard my name before, she said:

"Jean de Novelpont de Metz, my Lord receives you as His faithful knight and servant. He will be with us now and to the end."

And the people all uncovered and stood bareheaded round us, whilst I felt as though I had received a mandate from Heaven.

Then I went into the house with Jeanne, and asked her of herself, and of her visions and voices. She told me of them with the gentle frankness of a child, but with a reverence and humility that was beautiful to see, and which was in strange contrast to some of the things she spoke, wherein she told how that she herself was to be used of Heaven for the salvation of France.

I cannot give her words as she spoke them, sitting there in the window, the light upon her face, her eyes fixed more often upon the sunny sky than upon her interlocutor, though now and again she swept me with one of her wonderful glances. She told me how from a child she had heard voices, which she knew to be from above, speaking to her, bidding her to be good, to go to the church, to attend to her simple duties at home. But as she grew older there came a change.

She remembered the day when first she saw a wonderful white light hovering above her; and this light came again, and yet again; and the third time she saw in it the figure of an angel—more than that—of the Archangel Michael himself—the warrior of Heaven; and from him she first received the message that she was to be used for the deliverance of her people.

She was long in understanding what this meant. St. Michael told her she should receive other angelic visitors, and often after this St. Catherine and St.

Margaret appeared to her, and told her what was required of her, and what she must do. At first she was greatly affrighted, and wept, and besought them to find some other for the task, since she was but a humble country

maid, and knew nothing of the art of warfare, and shuddered at the sight of blood. But they told her to be brave, to trust in the Lord, to think only of Him and of His holy will towards her.

And so, by degrees, she lost all her fears, knowing that it was not of herself she would do this thing, and that her angels would be with her, her saints would watch over her, and her voices direct her in all that she should speak or do.

"And now," she added, clasping her hands, and looking full into my face, 24

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"now do they tell me that the time is at hand. Since last Ascensiontide they have bid me wait in quietness for the appointed hour; but of late my voices have spoken words which may not be set aside. I must be sent to the Dauphin. Orleans must be saved from the hosts of the English which encompass it. I am appointed for this task, and I shall accomplish it by the grace of my Lord and His holy saints.

Then the crown must be set upon the head of the Dauphin, and he must be anointed as the king. After that my task will be done; but not till then. And now I must needs set forth upon the appointed way. To the Dauphin I must go, to speak to him of things I may tell to none other; and the Sieur Robert de Baudricourt is appointed of Heaven to send me to Chinon. Wherefore, I pray you, gentle knight, bid him no longer delay; for I am straitened in spirit till I may be about my Lord's business, and He would not have me tarry longer."

I talked with her long and earnestly. Not that I doubted her. I could not do so. Although no voices came to me, yet my heart was penetrated by a conviction so deep and poignant that to doubt would have been impossible. France had been sold and betrayed by one bad woman; but here was the Maid who should arise to save! I knew it in my heart; yet I still spoke on and asked questions, for I must needs satisfy De Baudricourt, I must needs be able to answer all that he would certainly ask.

“How old are you, fair maiden?” I asked, as at length I rose to depart, and she stood, tall and slim, before me, straight as a young poplar, graceful, despite her coarse raiment, her feet and hands well fashioned, her limbs shapely and supple.

“I was seventeen last week,” she answered simply, “the fifth of January is my jour de fete.”

“And your parents, what think they of this? What said they when you bid them farewell for such an errand?”

The tears gathered slowly in her beautiful eyes; but they did not fall. She answered in a low voice:

“In sooth they know not for what I did leave them. They believed I went but to visit a sick friend. I did not dare to tell them all, lest my father should hold me back: He is very slow to believe my mission; he chides me bitterly if ever word be spoken anent it. Is it not always so when the Lord uses one of His children? Even our Lord’s brethren and sisters believed not on Him. How can the servant be greater than his Lord?”

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"You fear not, then, to disobey your parents?"

I had need to put this question; for it was one that De Baudricourt had insisted upon; for he knew something of Jacques d'Arc's opposition to his daughter's proposed campaign.

"I must obey my Lord even above my earthly parents," was her steadfast reply; "His word must stand the first. He knows all, and He will pardon. He knows that I love my father and my mother, and that if I only pleased myself I should never leave their side."

Then suddenly as she spoke a strange look of awe fell upon her; I think she had forgotten my presence, for when she spoke, her words were so low that I could scarce hear them.

"I go to my death!" she whispered, the colour ebbing from her face, "but I am in the hands of my Lord; His will alone can be done."

I went out from her presence with bent head. What did those last words signify—when hitherto all she had spoken was of deliverance, of victory? She spoke them without knowing it. Of that I was assured; and therefore I vowed to keep them locked in my heart. But I knew that I should never forget them.

I found Robert de Baudricourt awaiting my coming in the great hall, pacing restlessly to and fro. Bertrand was with him, and I saw by the tense expression upon his face that he was eager for my report. I gave him one quick glance upon entering, which I trow he read and understood; but to De Baudricourt I spoke with caution and with measured words, for he was a man whose scorn and ridicule were easily aroused, and I knew that Bertrand had fallen into a kind of contempt with him, in that he had so quickly believed in the mission of the Maid.

"Well, and what make you of the girl? Is she witch, or mad, or possessed by some spirit of vainglory and ambition? What has she said to you, and what think you of her?"

"In all truth, my lord, I believe her to be honest; and more than this, I believe her to be directed of God. Strange as it may seem, yet such things have been before, and who are we to say that God's arm is shortened, or that He is not the same as in the days of old? I have closely questioned the Maid as to her visions and voices, and I cannot believe them delusions of the senses. You may ask, are 26

they of the Devil? Then would I say, if there be doubt, let the Abbe Perigord approach her with holy water, with exorcisms, or with such sacred words and signs as devils must needs flee before. Then if it be established that the thing is not of the Evil One, we may the better regard it as from the Lord of whom she speaks. At least, if she can stand this test, I would do this much for her—give her a small escort to Chinon, with a letter to the Dauphin. After that your responsibility will cease. The matter will be in the hands of the King and his advisers."

"Ay, after I have made myself the laughingstock of the realm!" burst out De Baudricourt grimly; yet after he had questioned me again, and yet again, and had even held one interview himself with the Maid, who came of her own accord to the Castle to ask for him one day, he seemed to come to some decision, after much thought and wavering.

Bringing out one of his rattling oaths, he cried:

"Then if she can bear the touch of holy water, and the sign of book and taper and bell—and I know not what beside—then shall she be sent to the King at Chinon, and I, Robert de Baudricourt, will send her—come what may of the mission!"

I had myself proposed the test, and yet when the moment came I was ashamed of myself. The Abbe had put on his robes and his stole; a vessel containing holy water stood before him on the table; the book of the Blessed

Gospels was in his hands, a boy with a taper stood at his side. The place was the hall of the Castle, and the Governor with a few of those most in his confidence stood by to see what would follow. I was at his right hand.

Bertrand brought in the Maid. I know not what he had said to her, or whether he had prepared her for what was about to take place; but however that may have been, her face wore that calm and lofty serenity of expression which seemed to belong to her. As she approached she made a lowly reverence to the priest, and stood before him where Bertrand placed her, looking at him with earnest, shining eyes.

"My daughter," spoke the Abbe gravely, "have you security in your heart that the visions and voices sent to you come of good and not of evil? Many men and women have, ere this, been deceived—yea, even the holy Saints themselves have been tempted of the devil, that old serpent, who is the great deceiver of the hearts and spirits of men. Are you well assured in your heart that you are not thus deceived and led away by whispers and suggestions from the father of lies?"

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There was no anger in her face, but a beautiful look of reverent, yet joyful, confidence and peace.

"I am well assured, my father, that it is my Lord who speaks to me through His most holy and blessed Saints, and through the ever-glorious Archangel Michael."

"And yet, my daughter, you know that it is written in the Holy Scriptures that the devil can transform himself into an angel of light."

"Truly that is so, my father; but is it not also written that those who put their trust in the Lord shall never be confounded?"

"Yes, my daughter; and I pray God you may not be confounded. But it is my duty to try and test the spirits, so as to be a rock of defence to those beneath my care. Yet if things be with you as you say, you will have no fear."

"I have no fear, my father," she answered, and stood with folded hands and serene and smiling face whilst he went through those forms of exorcism and adjuration which, it is said, no evil spirit can endure without crying aloud, or causing that the person possessed should roll and grovel in agony upon the ground, or rush frantically forth out of sight and hearing.

But the Maid never moved, save to bend her head in reverence as the Thrice Holy Name was proclaimed, and as the drops of holy water fell upon her brow. To me it seemed almost like sacrilege, in face of that pure and holy calm, to entertain for one moment a doubt of the origin of her mission. Yet it may be that the test was a wise one; for De Baudricourt and those about him watched it with close and breathless wonder, and one and another whispered behind his hand:

"Of a surety she is no witch. She could never stand thus if there was aught of evil in her. Truly she is a marvellous Maid. If this thing be of the Lord, let

us not fight against Him."

The trial was over. The Maid received the blessing of the Abbe, who, if not convinced of the sacredness of her mission, was yet impotent to prove aught against her. It is strange to me, looking back at those days, how far less ready of heart the ecclesiastics were to receive her testimony and recognise in her the messenger of the Most High than were the soldiers, whether the generals whom she afterwards came to know, or the men who crowded to fight beneath her banner. One 28

would have thought that to priests and clergy a greater grace and power of understanding would have been vouchsafed; but so far from this, they always held her in doubt and suspicion, and were her secret foes from first to last.

I made it my task to see her safely home; and as we went, I asked:

"Was it an offence to you, fair Maid, that he should thus seek to test and try you?"

"Not an offence to me, Seigneur," she answered gently, "but he should not have had need to do it. For he did hear my confession on Friday. Therefore he should have known better. It is no offence to me, save inasmuch as it doth seem a slighting of my Lord."

The people flocked around her as she passed through the streets. It was wonderful how the common townsfolk believed in her. Already she was spoken of as a deliverer and a saviour of her country. Nay, more, her gentleness and sweetness so won upon the hearts of those who came in contact with her, that mothers prayed of her to come and visit their sick children, or to speak words of comfort to those in pain and suffering; and such was the comfort and strength she brought with her, that there were whispers of miraculous cures being performed by her.

In truth, I have no knowledge myself of any miracle performed by her, and the Maid denied that she possessed such gifts of healing. But that she

brought comfort and joy and peace with her I can well believe, and she had some skill with the sick whom she tended in her own village, so that it is likely that some may have begun to mend from the time she began to visit them.

As for De Baudricourt, his mind was made up. There was something about this girl which was past his understanding. Just at present it was not possible to send her to the King, for the rains, sometimes mingled with blinding snow storms, were almost incessant, the country lay partially under water, and though such a journey might be possible to a seasoned soldier, he declared it would be rank murder to send a young girl, who, perchance, had never mounted a horse before, all that great distance. She must needs wait till the waters had somewhat sub-sided, and till the cold had abated, and the days were somewhat longer.

The Maid heard these words with grave regret, and even disapproval.

“My Lord would take care of me. I have no fear,” she said; but De Baudricourt, although he now faithfully promised to send her to Chinon, would not be moved from his resolution to wait.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

For my part, I have always suspected that he sent a private messenger to Chinon to ask advice what he should do, and desired to await his return ere acting. But of that I cannot speak certainly, since he never admitted it himself.

If the delay fretted the Maid's spirit, she never spoke with anger or impatience; much of her time was spent in a little chapel in the crypt of the church at Vaucouleurs, where stood an image of Our Lady, before which she would kneel sometimes for hours together in rapt devotion. I myself went thither sometimes to pray; and often have I seen her there, so absorbed in her devotions that she knew nothing of who came or went.

By this time Bertrand and I had steadfastly resolved to accompany the Maid not only to Chinon, but upon whatsoever campaign her voices should afterwards send her. Although we were knights, we neither of us possessed great wealth; indeed, we had only small estates, and these were much diminished in value from the wasting war and misfortunes of the country. Still we resolved to muster each a few men-at-arms, and form for her a small train; for De Baudricourt, albeit willing to send her with a small escort to Chinon, had neither the wish nor the power to equip any sort of force to accompany her, though there would be no small danger on the journey, both from the proximity of the English in some parts, and the greater danger from roving bands of Burgundians, whose sole object was spoil and plunder, and their pastime the slaughter of all who opposed them.

And now we began to ask one another in what guise the Maid should travel; for it was obvious that her cumbrous peasant garb was little suited for the work she had in hand, and we made many fanciful plans of robing her after the fashion of some old-time queen, such as Boadicea or Semiramis, and wondered whether we could afford to purchase some rich clothing and a noble charger, and so convey her to the King in something of regal state and pomp.

But when, one day, we spoke something of this to the Maid herself, she shook her head with a smile, and said:

“Gentle knights, I give you humble and hearty thanks; but such rich robes and gay trappings are not for me. My voices have bidden me what to do. I am to assume the dress of a boy, since I must needs live for a while amongst soldiers and men. I am sent to do a man’s work, therefore in the garb of a man must I set forth. Our good citizens of Vaucouleurs are already busy with the dress I must shortly assume. There is none other in which my work can be so well accomplished.”

30

A MISSION FROM GOD

And in truth we saw at once the sense of her words. She had before her a toilsome journey in the companionship of men. She must needs ride, since there was no other way of travelling possible; and why should the frailest and tenderest of the party be burdened by a dress that would incommode her at every turn?

And when upon the very next day she appeared in the Castle yard in the hose and doublet and breeches of a boy, and asked of us to give her her first lesson in horsemanship, all our doubts and misgivings fled away. She wore her dress with such grace, such ease, such simplicity, that it seemed at once the right and fitting thing; and not one of the soldiers in the courtyard who watched her feats that day, passed so much as a rude jest upon her, far less offered her any insult. In truth, they were speedily falling beneath the spell which she was soon to exercise upon a whole army, and it is no marvel to me that this was so; for every day I felt the charm of her presence deepening its hold upon my heart.

Never have I witnessed such quickness of mastery as the Maid showed, both in her acquirement of horsemanship and in the use of arms, in both of which arts we instructed her day by day. I had noted her strength and suppleness of limb the very first day I had seen her; and she gave marvellous proof of it now.

She possessed also that power over her horse which she exercised over men, and each charger that she rode in turn answered almost at once to her voice and hand, with a docility he never showed to other riders. Yet she never smote or spurred them; the sound of her voice, or the light pressure of knee or hand was enough.

She had never any fear from the first, and was never unhorsed. Very soon she acquired such skill and ease that we had no fears for her with regard to the journey she soon must take.

Although filling the time up thus usefully, her heart was ever set upon her plan, and daily she would wistfully ask:

“May we not yet sally forth to the Dauphin?”

Still she bore the delay well, never losing opportunities for learning such things as might be useful to her; and towards the end of the month there came a peremptory summons to her from the Duke of Lorraine, who was lying very ill at Nancy.

“They tell me,” he wrote to De Baudricourt, “that you have at Vaucouleurs a woman who may be in sooth that Maid of Lorraine who, it has been prophesied, is to arise and save France. I have a great curiosity to see her; wherefore, I pray 31

you, send her to me without delay. It may be that she will recover me of my sickness. In any case, I would fain have speech of her; so do not fail to send her forthwith.”

De Baudricourt had no desire to offend his powerful neighbour, and he forthwith went down to the house of Leroyer, taking Bertrand and me with him, to ask of the Maid whether she would go to see the Duke at his Court, since the journey thither was but short, and would be a fitting preparation for the longer one.

We found her sitting in the saddler’s shop, with one of his children on her lap, watching whilst he fashioned for her a saddle, which the citizens of Vaucouleurs were to give her. Bertrand and I were to present the horse she was to ride, and I had also sent to my home for a certain holiday suit and light armour made for a brother of mine who had died young. I had noted that the Maid had just such a slim, tall figure as he, and was certain that this suit, laid away by our mother in a cedar chest, would fit her as though made for her. But it had not come yet, and she was habited in the tunic and hose she now wore at all times. Her beautiful hair still hung in heavy masses round her shoulders, giving to her something of the look of a saintly warrior on painted window.

Later on, when she had to wear a headpiece, she cut off her long curling locks, and then her hair just framed her face like a nimbus; but today it was still hanging loose upon her shoulders, and the laughing child had got his little hands well twisted in the waving mass, upon which the midday sun was shining clear and strong. She had risen, and was looking earnestly at De Baudricourt; yet all the while she seemed to be, as it were, listening for other sounds than those of his voice.

When he ceased she was silent for a brief while, and then spoke.

"I would fain it had been to the Dauphin you would send me, Seigneur; but since that may not be yet, I will gladly go to the Duke, if I may but turn aside to make my pilgrimage to the shrine of St Nicholas, where I would say some prayers, and ask help."

"Visit as many shrines as you like, so as you visit the Duke as well," answered De Baudricourt, who always spoke with a sort of rough bluffness to the Maid, not unkindly, though it lacked gentleness. But she never evinced fear of him, and for that he respected her. She showed plenty of good sense whilst the details of the journey were being arranged, and was in no wise abashed at the prospect of appearing at a Court. How should she be, indeed, who was looking 32

forward with impatience to her appearance at the Court of an uncrowned King?

Bertrand and I, with some half-dozen men-at-arms, were to form her escort, and upon the very next day, the sun shining bright, and the wind blowing fresh from the north over the wet lands, drying them somewhat after the long rains, we set forth.

The Maid rode the horse which afterwards was to carry her so many long, weary miles. He was a tall chestnut, deep in the chest, strong in the flank, with a proudly arching neck, a great mane of flowing hair, a haughty fashion of lifting his shapely feet, and an eye that could be either mild or fierce, according to the fashion in which he was treated. On his brow was a curious

mark, something like a cross in shape, and the colour of it was something deeper than the chestnut of his coat. The Maid marked this sign at the first glance, and she called the horse her Crusader. Methinks she was cheered and pleased by the red cross she thus carried before her, and she and her good steed formed one of those friendships which are good to see betwixt man and beast.

Our journey was not adventurous; nor will I waste time in telling overmuch about it. We visited the shrine, where the Maid passed a night in fasting and vigil, and laid thereon a little simple offering, such as her humble state permitted. The next day she was presented to the Duke of Lorraine, as he lay wrapped in costly silken coverlets upon his great bed in one of the most sumptuous apartments of his Castle.

He gazed long and earnestly at the Maid, who stood beside him, flinching neither from his hollow gaze, nor from the more open curiosity or admiration bestowed upon her by the lords and ladies assembled out of desire to see her. I doubt me if she gave them a thought. She had come to see the sick Duke, and her thoughts were for him alone.

There was something very strange and beautiful in her aspect as she stood there. Her face was pale from her vigil and fast; her hair hung round it in a dark waving mass, that lighted up at the edges with gold where the light touched it.

Her simple boy's dress was splashed and travel stained; but her wonderful serene composure was as marked here as it had been throughout. No fears or tremors shook her, nor did any sort of consciousness of self or of the strangeness of her position come to mar the gentle dignity of her mien or the calm loveliness of her face.

The Duke raised himself on his elbow the better to look at her.

33

A MISSION FROM GOD

"Is this true what I have heard of you, that you are the Maid of Lorraine, raised up, according to the word of the wizard Merlin, to save France in the hour of her extremity?"

"I am come to save France from the English," she answered at once; "to drive them from the city of Orleans, to bring the Dauphin to Rheims, and there see the crown set upon his head. This I know, for my Lord has said it. Who I am matters nothing, save only as I accomplish the purpose for which I am sent."

Her sweet ringing voice sounded like a silver trumpet through the room, and the lords and ladies pressed nearer to hear and see.

"In sooth, the Maid herself—the Maid who comes to save France!"

Such was the whisper which went round; and I marvelled not; for the look upon that face, the glorious shining in those eyes, was enough to convince the most sceptical that the beatific vision had indeed been vouchsafed to them.

The Duke fell back on his pillows, regarding her attentively.

"If then, Maiden, you can thus read the future, tell me, shall I recover me of this sickness?" he gasped.

"Of that, sire, I have no knowledge," she answered. "That lies with God alone; but if you would be His servant, flee from the wrath to come, which your sins have drawn upon you. Turn to the Lord in penitence. Do His will. Be reconciled to your wife; for such is the commandment of God. Perchance then you will find healing for body and soul. But seek not that which is hidden. Do only the will of the Lord, and trust all to Him."

She was hustled from the room by the frightened attendants, who feared for her very life at the hands of their irate lord. He had done many a man to death for less than such counsel. But the Maid felt not fear.

“He cannot touch me,” she said, “I have my Lord’s work yet to accomplish.”

And in truth the Duke wished her no ill, though he asked not to see her more. Perhaps—who knows—these words may have aroused in him some gleams of penitence for his past life. I have heard he made a better end than was expected of him when his time came. And before the Maid left the Castle he sent her 34

a present of money, and said he might even send his son to help the Dauphin, if once Orleans were relieved, and her words began to fulfil themselves.

So then we journeyed home again, and we reached Vaucouleurs on the afternoon of the twelfth day of February. The Maid had been smiling and happy up till that time, and, since the weather was improving, we had great hopes of soon starting forth upon the journey for Chinon. Nevertheless, the streams were still much swollen, and in some places the ground was so soft that it quaked beneath our horses’ feet. We travelled without misadventure, however, and I wondered what it was that brought the cloud to the brow of the Maid as we drew nearer and nearer to Vaucouleurs.

But I was to know ere long; for as we rode into the courtyard of the Castle the Maid slipped from her horse ere any could help her, and went straight into the room where the Governor was sitting, with her fearless air of mastery.

“My lord of Baudricourt, you do great ill to your master the Dauphin in thus keeping me from him in the time of his great need. Today a battle has been fought hard by the city of Orleans, and the arms of the French have suffered disaster and disgrace. If this go on, the hearts of the soldiers will be as water, the purpose of the Lord will be hindered, and you, Seigneur, will be the

cause, in that you have not hearkened unto me, nor believed that I am sent of Him."

"How know you the thing of which you speak, girl?" asked De Baudricourt, startled at the firmness of her speech.

"My voices have told me," she answered; "voices that cannot lie. The French have met with disaster. The English have triumphed, and I still waste my time in idleness here! How long is this to continue, Robert de Baudricourt?"

A new note had come into her voice—the note of the general who commands. We heard it often enough later; but this was the first time I had noted it.

How would De Baudricourt take it?

"Girl," he said, "I will send forth a courier at once to ride with all speed to the westward. If this thing be so, he will quickly meet some messenger with the news. If it be as you have said, if this battle has been fought and lost, then will I send you forth without a day's delay to join the King at Chinon."

"So be it," answered the Maid; and turned herself to the chapel, where she spent the night in prayer.

35

A MISSION FROM GOD

It was Bertrand who rode forth in search of tidings, his heart burning within him. It was he who nine days later entered Vaucouleurs again, weary and jaded, but with a great triumph light in his eyes. He stood before De Baudricourt and spoke.

"It is even as the Maid hath said. Upon the very day when we returned to Vaucouleurs, the English—a small handful of men—overthrew at Rouvray a large squadron of the French, utterly routing and well-nigh destroying them. The English were but a small party, convoying herrings to the besiegers of Orleans. The ground was strewn with herrings after the fight, which men call the Battle of the Herrings. Consternation reigns in the hearts of the French—an army flies before a handful! The Maid spake truly; the need is desperate. If help reach not the Dauphin soon, all will be lost!"

"Then let the Maid go!" thundered the old man, roused at last like an angry lion; "and may the God she trusts in guard and keep her, and give to her the victory!"

So the thing had come to pass at last—as she had always said it must. Robert de Baudricourt was about to send her to the Court of the Dauphin at Chinon. The weary days of waiting were at an end. She was to start forthwith; she and her escort were alike ready, willing, and eager. Her strange mystic faith and lofty courage seemed to have spread through the ranks of the chosen few who were to attend her.

I trow, had she asked it, half the men of Vaucouleurs would have gladly followed in her train; for the whole town was moved to its core by the presence of the Maid in its midst. Almost were the townsfolk ready to worship her, only that there was something in her own simplicity and earnest piety which forbade such demonstration. All knew that the Maid herself would be first to rebuke any person offering to her homage other than true man can and ought to offer to true woman.

And now let me speak here, once and for all, of the love and reverence and devotion which the Maid had power to kindle in the hearts of those with whom she came in contact. I can indeed speak of this, for I am proud to this day to call myself her true knight. From the first I felt towards her as I have felt to none since—not even to the wife of my manhood's tried affections. It was such a love as may be inspired by some almost angelic, presence—there was no passion in it. I believe I speak truly when I say that not one of the Maid's true followers and knights and comrades-in-arms, ever thought of her as possible wife—ever even dreamed of 36

her as lover. She moved amongst us as a being from another sphere. She inspired us with a courage, a power, and a confidence in her and in our cause, which nothing could shake or daunt. She was like a star, set in the firmament of heaven. Our eyes, our hearts turned towards her, but she was never as one of us.

Still less was she as other women are, fashioned for soft flatteries, ready to be wooed and won. Ah, no! With the Maid it was far otherwise. Truly do I think that of herself she had no thought, save as she was the instrument appointed of her Lord to do the appointed work. To that task her whole soul was bent. It filled her to the full with an ecstasy of devotion which required no words in which to express itself. And I can faithfully say that it was not the beauty of her face, the sweetness of her ringing voice, nor the grace and strength of her supple form which made of men her willing followers and servants.

No, it was a power stronger and more sacred than any such carnal admiration. It came from the conviction, which none could fail to reach, that this Maid was indeed chosen and set apart of Heaven for a great and mighty work, and that in obeying her, one was obeying the will of God, and working out some purpose determined in the counsels of the heavenlies.

With her man's garb and light armour, the Maid had assumed an air of unconscious command which sat with curious graceful dignity upon the serene calm of her ordinary demeanour. Towards her followers of the humbler sort she ever showed herself full of consideration and kindliness.

She felt for their fatigues or privations in marching, was tenderly solicitous later on for the wounded. Above all, she was insistent that the dying should receive the consolations of religion, and it was a terrible thought to her that either friend or foe should perish unshriven and unassoiled.

Her last act at Vaucouleurs, ere we started off in the early dawn of a late February day, was to attend Mass with all her following.

An hour later, after a hasty meal provided by De Baudricourt, we were all in the saddle, equipped and eager for the start. The Maid sat her chestnut charger as to the manner born. The pawings of the impatient animal caused her no anxiety. She was looking with a keen eye over her little band of followers, taking in, as a practised leader of men might do, their equipment and general readiness for the road. She pointed out to me several small defects which required adjusting and rectifying.

Already she seemed to have assumed without effort, and as a matter of 37

course, the position of leader and general. There was no abatement of her gentle sweetness of voice or aspect, but the air of command combined with it as though it came direct and without effort as a gift from heaven. None resented it; all submitted to it, and submitted with a sense of lofty joy and satisfaction which I have never experienced since, and which is beyond my power to describe.

There was one change in the outward aspect of the Maid, for her beautiful hair had been cut off, and now her head was crowned only by its cluster of short curling locks, upon which today she wore a cloth cap, though soon she was to adopt the headpiece which belonged to the light armour provided. She had been pleased by the dress of white and blue cut-cloth which I had humbly offered her, and right well did it become her. The other suit provided by the townsfolk was carried by one of the squires, that she might have change of garment if (as was but too probable) we should encounter drenching rains or blustering snow storms.

So far she had no sword of her own, nor had she spoken of the need of such a weapon for herself. But as we assembled in the courtyard of the Castle, getting ourselves into the order of the march, De Baudricourt himself appeared upon the steps leading into the building, bearing in his hands a sword in a velvet scabbard, which he gravely presented to the Maid.

"A soldier, lady, has need of a weapon," were his words, as he placed it in her hands; "take this sword, then. I trow it will do you faithful service; and may the Lord in whom you trust lead you to victory, and save this distracted realm of France from the perils which threaten to overwhelm her!"

"I thank you, Seigneur de Baudricourt," she answered, as she took the weapon, and permitted me to sling it for her in the belt for the purpose which she already wore, "I will keep your gift, and remember your good words, and how that you have been chosen of heaven to send me forth thus, and have done the bidding of the Lord, as I knew that so true a man must needs do at the appointed time. For the rest, have no fear. The Lord will accomplish that which He has promised. Before the season now beginning so tardily has reached its height, the Dauphin will be the anointed King of France, the English will have suffered defeat and Orleans will be free!"

"Heaven send you speak sooth, fair Maid," answered the rugged old soldier, as he eyed the slim figure before him with something of mingled doubt, wonder, and reverence in his eyes.

Then as though some strange impulse possessed him, he took her hand

and kissed it, and bending the knee before her, said:

"Give me, I pray you, a blessing, ere you depart!"

A wonderful light sprang into her eyes. She laid her hand upon the grizzled head, and lifted her own face, as was her wont, to the sunny sky.

"The blessing of the King of Heaven be upon you, Robert de Baudricourt, in that you have been an instrument chosen of Him. The grace and love of our Blessed Lady be yours, in that you have shown kindness and favour to a

simple maid of the people, set apart by Heaven for a certain task. The favour and protection of the Saints be yours, in that you have believed the words of one who spake of them, and have been obedient to the command sent to you from them!"

She ceased speaking; but still continued to gaze upward with rapt and earnest eyes. Every head was bared, and we all gazed upon her, as upon one who looks through the open Gate of Heaven, and to whom is vouchsafed a glimpse of the Beatific Vision.

Then clear and sweet her voice rose once more. Her face was transfigured; a great light seemed to shine either upon or from it, no man could say which.

"O Lord God, Father of the Heavenlies, O sweet Jesu, Saviour of mankind, O Blessed Mother, Queen of Heaven, O Holy Michael, Archangel of the shining sword, O Blessed Saints—Catherine and Margaret, beloved of Heaven—give to these, Your children, Your blessing, Your help, Your protection, Your counsel! Be with us in our journeyings—in our uprising and down lying, in our going out and coming in—in all we put our hands unto! Be with us and uphold us, and bring us in safety to our journey's end; for we go forth in the strength which is from above, and which can never fail us till the work appointed be accomplished!"

Then we rode forth, out of the courtyard, and into the streets of the town, which were thronged and lined with townsfolk, and with people from the surrounding villages, who had crowded in to see the wonderful Maid, and witness the out-going of the little band which was to accompany her to Chinon.

Two of the Maid's brothers had sought to be of her train, and one went with us upon that day. The second she sent back with a letter (written at her dictation by my fingers, for she herself knew not letters, though of so quick an understanding in other matters) to her parents, praying earnestly for their forgiveness for what must seem to them like disobedience, and imploring their blessing. And this 39

letter she dispatched by Jean, permitting Pierre to accompany us on the march.

Her mother and two younger brothers, at least, believed in her mission by this time; but her father was doubtful and displeased, fearful for her safety, and suspicious of her credentials; and the eldest son remained of necessity at home to help his father, and whether or no he believed in his sister's call, I have never truly heard. But I know it pleased her that Pierre should be in her escort, though she was careful not to show him any marked favour above others; and as in days to come she was more and more thrown with the great ones of the land, she of necessity was much parted from him, though the bond of sisterly love was never slackened; and both Pierre, and afterwards Jean, followed her through all the earlier parts of her victorious career.

Leaving Vaucouleurs, we had need to march with circumspection, for the country was in no settled state, and it was probable that rumours of our march might have got abroad, and that roving bands of English or Burgundian soldiers might be on the look out for us; for already it was being noised abroad that a miraculous Maid had appeared to the aid of France, and though, no doubt, men jeered, and professed incredulity, still it was likely that she would be regarded in the light of a valuable prize if she could be carried off, and taken either to Duke Philip or to the Regent Bedford in Paris.

We had with us a King's archer from Chinon, who had been sent with news of the disaster at Rouvray. He was to conduct us back to Chinon by the best and safest routes. But he told us that the country was beset by roving bands of hostile soldiers, that his comrades had been slain, and that he himself only escaped as by a miracle; and his advice was urgent that after the first day we should travel by night, and lie in hiding during the hours of daylight—a piece of advice which we were fain to follow, being no strong force, able to fight our way through a disturbed country, and being very solicitous for the safety of the precious Maid who was at once our chiefest hope and chiefest care.

This, then, we did, after that first day's travel in the bright springtide sunshine. We were attended for many a mile by a following of mounted men from the district round, and when, as the sun began to wester in the sky, they

took their leave of us, the Maid thanked them with gracious words for their company and good wishes, though she would not suffer them to kiss her hand or pay her homage; and after that they had departed, we did halt for many hours, eating and resting ourselves; for we meant to march again when the moon was up, and not lose a single night, so eager was the Maid to press on towards Chinon.

40

A MISSION FROM GOD

Of our journey I will not speak too particularly. Ofttimes we were in peril from the close proximity of armed bands, as we lay in woods and thickets by day, avoiding towns and villages, lest we should draw too much notice upon ourselves.

Ofttimes we suffered from cold, from hunger, from drenching rains and bitter winds. Once our way was barred by snow drifts, and often the swollen rivers and streams forced us to wander for miles seeking a ford that was practicable.

But whatever were the hardships encountered, no word of murmuring ever escaped the lips of the Maid; rather her courage and sweet serenity upheld us all, and her example of patience and unselfishness inspired even the roughest of the men-at-arms with a desire to emulate it. Never, methinks, on such a toilsome march was so little grumbling, so little discouragement, and, above all, so little swearing. And this, in particular, was the doing of the Maid. For habit is strong with us all, and when things went amiss the oath would rise to the lips of the men about her, and be uttered without a thought.

But that was a thing she could not bear. Her sweet pained face would be turned upon the speaker. Her clear, ringing tones would ask the question:

"Shall we, who go forward in the name of the Lord, dare to take His holy name lightly upon our lips? What are His own words? Swear not at all. Shall we not seek to obey Him? Are we not vowed to His service? And must not the soldier be obedient above all others? Shall we mock Him by calling ourselves His followers, and yet doing that without a thought which He hath forbidden?"

Not once nor twice, but many times the Maid had to speak such words as these; but she never feared to speak them, and her courage and her purity of heart and life threw its spell over the rough men she had led, and they

became docile in her hands like children, ready to worship the very ground she trod on.

Long afterwards it was told me by one of mine own men-at-arms that there had been a regular plot amongst the rougher of the soldiers at the outset to do her a mischief, and to sell her into the hands of the Burgundians or the English. But even before leaving Vaucouleurs the men had wavered, half ashamed of their own doubts and thoughts, and before we had proceeded two days' journey forward, all, to a man, would have laid down their lives in her service.

The only matter that troubled the Maid was that we were unable to hear Mass, as she longed to do daily. The risk of showing ourselves in town or village was too great. But there came a night, when, as we journeyed, we approached the town of Fierbois, a place very well known to me; and when we halted in a wood 41

with the first light of day, and the wearied soldiers made themselves beds amid the dried fern and fallen leaves, I approached the Maid, who was gazing wistfully towards the tapering spire of a church, visible at some distance away, and I said to her:

"Gentle Maid, yonder is the church of Sainte Catherine at Fierbois, and there will be, without doubt, early Mass celebrated within its walls. If you will trust yourself with Bertrand and myself, I trow we could safely convey you thither, and bring you back again, ere the day be so far advanced that the world will be astir to wonder at us."

Her face brightened as though a sunbeam had touched it. She needed not to reply in words. A few minutes later, and we were walking together through the wood, and had quickly reached the church, where the chiming of the bell told us that we should not be disappointed of our hope.

We knelt at the back of the church, and there were few worshippers there that morning. I could not but watch the face of the Maid, and suddenly I felt a curious thrill run through me, as though I had been touched by an unseen

hand. I looked at her, and upon her face had come a look which told me that she was listening to some voice unheard by me. She clasped her hands, her eyes travelled toward the altar, and remained fixed upon it, as though she saw a vision. Her lips moved, and I thought I heard the murmured words:

"Blessed Sainte Catherine, I hear. I will remember. When the time comes I shall know what to do."

When the priest had finished his office we slipped out before any one else moved, and reached the shelter of the woods again without encountering any other person. I almost hoped that the Maid would speak to us of what had been revealed to her in that church, but she kept the matter in her own heart. Yet, methinks, she pondered it long and earnestly; for although she laid her down as if to sleep, her eyes were generally wide open, looking upwards through the leafless budding boughs of the trees as though they beheld things not of this earth.

It was upon this day that I wrote, at the Maid's request, a letter to the uncrowned King at Chinon, asking of him an audience on behalf of Jeanne d'Arc, the maiden from Domremy, of whom he had probably heard. This letter I dispatched to Sir Guy de Laval, asking him to deliver it to the King with his own hands, and to bring us an answer ere we reached Chinon, which we hoped now to do in a short while.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

The missive was carried by the King's archer, who knew his road right well, and was acquainted with the person of Sir Guy. He was to ride forward in all haste, whilst we were to follow in slower and more cautious fashion.

I think it was about the fifth day of March when the great towers of Chinon first broke upon our gaze. We had been travelling all the night, and it was just as the dawn was breaking that we espied the huge round turrets rising, as it were, from amid the mists which clung about the river and its banks. There we halted, for no message had yet come from the King; but upon the Maid's face was a look of awe and radiant joy as she stood a little apart, gazing upon the goal of her toilsome journey. No fear beset her as to her reception, just as no fears had troubled her with regard to perils by the way.

"God clears the road for me," she said, when news had been brought from time to time of bands of soldiers whom we had narrowly escaped; and now, as she looked upon the towers of Chinon, growing more and more distinct as the daylight strengthened, her face wore a smile of serene confidence in which natural fear and shrinking had no part.

"The Dauphin will receive me. Fear nothing. The work which is begun will go forward to its completion. God hath spoken in His power. He hath spoken, and His word cannot fail."

So after we had fed she lay down, wrapped in a cloak, and fell asleep like a child; whilst I rode forward a little way along the plain, for I had seen a handful of horsemen sallying forth, as it seemed from the Castle, and I hoped that it was Sir Guy bearing letter or message from the King.

Nor was I mistaken in this hope. Soon I was certain of my man, and Sir Guy in turn recognising me, spurred forward in advance of his followers, and we met alone in the plain, Bertrand, my companion, being with me.

“So there really is to be a miracle worked, and by a Maid!” cried Sir Guy, as we rode with him towards our camp; “Mort de Dieu—but it is passing strange!

All the Court is in a fever of wonder about this Angelic Maid, as some call her; whilst others vow she is either impostor or witch. Is it the same, Bertrand, of whom you did speak upon the day we parted company?”

“The same; and yet in one way not the same, for since then she hath grown apace in power and wonder, so that all who see her marvel at her, and some be 43

ready to worship her. But we will say no more. You shall see for yourself, and the King also shall see, if he refuse not to receive one who comes to him as the messenger of God.”

“I am sent to conduct the Maid presently to the Castle,” answered Sir Guy.

“There is now great desire to see her and hear her, and to try and test the truth of her mission. The Generals scoff aloud at the thought of going to battle with a maid for leader. The Churchmen look grave, and talk of witchcraft and delusion. The ladies of the Court are in a fever to see her. As for the King and his Ministers, they are divided in mind ‘twixt hope and fear; but truly matters are come to such desperate pass with us that, if some help come not quickly, the King will flee him away from his distracted realm, and leave the English and Burgundians to ravage and subdue at will!”

“God forbid!” said I, and crossed myself.

Scarce had I spoken the words before I saw approaching us on her chestnut charger the Maid herself, who rode forward to meet us at a foot’s pace, and reined back a few yards from us, her eyes fixed full upon the face of Sir Guy, who uncovered, I scarce know why, for how should he know that this youthful soldier was indeed the Maid herself?

“You come from the Dauphin,” she said; “go tell him that the darkest hour but heralds the dawn. He must not flee away. He must stay to face his foes. I

will lead his armies to victory, and he shall yet be crowned King of France. Let him never speak more of deserting his realm. That shall not—that must not be!"

Sir Guy was off his horse by now; he bent his knee to the Maid.

"I will tell the King that the Deliverer hath truly come," he said; and taking her hand, ere she could prevent it, he reverently kissed it.

So Guy de Laval had fallen beneath the spell of the Maid, even as we had done. He spoke of it to me afterwards. It was not because of her words, albeit she had plainly shown knowledge of that which he had been saying before her approach. It was not the beauty of her serene face, or the dignity of her mien. It was as though some power outside of himself urged him to some act of submission. An overshadowing presence seemed to rest upon him as with the touch of a hand, and he who had laughed at the idea of the restoration of miracles suddenly felt all his doubts and misgivings fall away.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

We rode together back to our camp, and there we talked long and earnestly of many things. The Maid had much to ask of Sir Guy, but her questions were not such as one would have guessed. She never inquired how the Dauphin (as she always called him) had first heard of her, how he regarded her, what his Ministers and the Court thought of her mission, whether they would receive her in good part, what treatment she might expect when she should appear at Chinon.

No; such thoughts as these seemed never to enter her head. She was in no wise troubled as to the things which appertained to herself. Not once did a natural curiosity on this ground suggest such inquiries; and though we, her followers, would fain have asked many of these questions, something in her own absence of interest, her own earnestness as to other matters, restrained us from putting them.

It was of the city of Orleans she desired to know. What was the condition of the garrison? What were the armies of England doing? What was the disposition of the beleaguering force? Was any project of relief on foot amongst the Dauphin's soldiers? Did they understand how much depended upon the rescue of the devoted town?

Guy de Laval was able to answer these questions, for he had himself ridden from Chinon to Orleans with messages to the Generals in the beleaguered city. He reported that the blockade was not perfected; that provisions could still find their way—though with risk, and danger of loss—into the town, and that messengers with letters could pass to and fro by exercising great caution, and by the grace of Heaven. He told her of the great fortresses the English had built, where they dwelt in safety, and menaced the town and battered its walls with their engines of war.

The garrison and the city were yet holding bravely out, and the Generals Dunois and La Hire were men of courage and capacity. But when the Maid asked how it came about that the English—who could not be so numerous as

the French forces in the town—had been suffered to make these great works unmolested, he could only reply with a shake of the head, and with words of evil omen.

"It is the terror of the English which has fallen upon them. Since the victory of Agincourt, none have ever been able to see English soldiers drawn up in battle array without feeling their blood turn to water, and their knees quake under them.

I know not what the power is; but at Rouvray it was shown forth again. A small force of soldiers—but a convoy with provisions for the English lines—overcame and chased to destruction a French army ten times its own strength. It is as though the English had woven some spell about us. We cannot face them—to our shame 45

be it spoken! The glorious days of old are past. If Heaven come not to our aid, the cause of France is lost!"

"Heaven has come to the aid of France," spoke the Maid, with that calm certainty which never deserted her; "have no fear, gentle knight. Let the Dauphin but send me to Orleans, and the English will speedily be chased away."

"It will need a great army to achieve that, fair Maid," spoke Sir Guy; "and alas, the King has but a small force at his disposal, and the men are faint hearted and fearful."

"It is no matter," answered the Maid, with shining eyes; "is it anything to my Lord whether He overcomes by many or by few? Is His arm shortened at all, that He should not fulfil that which He has promised? France shall see ere long that the Lord of Hosts fights for her. Will not that be enough?"

"I trow it will," answered De Laval, baring his head.

It was not until the evening was drawing on that we entered the fortress of Chinon, where the King held his Court. A very splendid castle it was, and when, later in my life, I once visited the realm of England, and looked upon

the Castle of Windsor there, it did bring back greatly to my mind that Castle of Chinon, with its towers and battlements overhanging, as it were, the river, and the town clustered at its foot.

We had delayed our approach that our wearied and way-worn men might rest and give a little care to their clothes and arms, so that we presented not too travel-stained and forlorn an appearance. We desired to do honour to the Maid we escorted, and to assume an air of martial pomp, so far as it was possible to us.

Sir Guy had ridden on in front to announce our coming. He told me that the King was full of curiosity about the Maid, and that the ladies of the Court were consumed with wonder and amaze; but that the Prime Minister, De la Tremouille, was strenuously set against having aught to do with that "dreamer of dreams," as he slightingly called her, whilst the King's confessor was much of the same mind, in spite of what was reported about her from the priests who had seen and examined her.

There was no mistaking the sensation which our approach occasioned when at last we reached the walls of the Castle. Soldiers and townspeople, gentlemen and servants, were assembled at every coign of vantage to watch us ride in; and 46

every eye was fixed upon the Maid, who rode as one in a dream, her face slightly raised, her eyes shining with the great joy of an object at last achieved, and who seemed unconscious of the scrutiny to which she was subjected, and unaware of the excitement which her presence occasioned.

For the most part deep silence reigned as we passed by. No acclamation of welcome greeted us, nor did any murmurs of distrust smite upon our ears. There was whispering and a rustling of garments, and the clank of arms; but no articu-late words, either friendly or hostile, till, as we passed the drawbridge, one of the sentries, a great, brawny fellow, half French half Scottish, uttered an insult to the Maid, accompanying his words by a horrible blasphemy.

My hand was upon my sword hilt. I could have slain the man where he stood; but I felt the Maid's touch on my shoulder, and my hand sank to my side. She paused before the sentry, gazing at him with earnest eyes, full of mournful reproach and sorrow.

"O Lord Jesu, forgive him!" she breathed softly, and as the fellow, half ashamed, but truculent still, and defiant, turned upon her as though he would have repeated either his insult or his blasphemy, she held up her hand and spoke aloud, so that all who stood by might hear her words:

"O, my friend, speak not so rashly, but seek to make your peace with God.

Know you not how near you stand to death this night? May God pardon and receive your soul!"

The man shrank back as one affrighted. It was scarce two hours later that as he was crossing a narrow bridge-like parapet, leading from one part of the Castle to another, he fell into the swollen and rapid stream beneath, and was heard of no more. Some called it witchcraft, and said that the Maid had overlooked him; but the more part regarded it as a sign that she could read the future, and that things unknown to others were open to her eyes; and this, indeed, none could doubt who were with her at this time, as I shall presently show.

I had expected that Sir Guy would come to lead us into the chamber of audience, where we were told the King would receive us. But he did not come, and we were handed on from corridor to corridor, from room to room, first by one richly-apparelled servant of the Court, then by another.

Our men-at-arms, of course, had been detained in one of the courtyards, where their lodgings were provided. Only Bertrand and I were suffered, by vir-47

tue of our knighthood, to accompany the Maid into the presence of royalty; and neither of us had ever seen the King, or knew what his outward man was like.

But she asked no questions of us as to that, nor how she was to comport herself when she reached the audience chamber. Neither had she desired to change her travel-stained suit for any other, though, in truth, there was little to choose betwixt them now; only methinks most in her case would have provided some sort of gay raiment wherewith to appear before the King. But the Maid thought nought of herself, but all of her mission, and she held that this was a matter which could be touched by no outward adorning or bravery of apparel.

None who passed through the galleries and corridors of the Castle of Chinon in these days would have guessed to what a desperate pass the young King's affairs had come. Music and laughter resounded there. Courtiers fluttered about in gorgeous array, and fine ladies like painted butterflies bore them company. Feasting and revelry swallowed up the days and nights. No clang of arms disturbed the gaieties of the careless young monarch.

If despair and desperation were in his heart, he pushed them back with a strong hand. He desired only to live in the present. He would not look beyond. So long as he could keep his Court about him, he would live after this fashion; and when the English had swept away the last barriers, and were at the very gates, then he would decide whether to surrender himself upon terms, or to fly to some foreign land. But to face the foe in gallant fight was an alternative which had never been entertained by him, until such time as he had received the message from the Maid; and then it was rather with wonder and curiosity than any belief in her mission that he had consented to receive her.

A pair of great double doors was flung open before us. We stood upon the threshold of a vast room, lighted by some fifty torches, and by the blaze of a gi-gantic fire which roared halfway up the vast chimney. This great audience chamber seemed full of dazzling jewels and gorgeous raiment. One could scarce see the faces and figures in the shifting throng for the wonder of this blaze of colour.

But there was no dais on which the King was seated in state, as I had expected. No figure stood out conspicuous in the throng as that of royalty. I gazed at one and another, as we stood in the doorway, our eyes still half dazzled by the glare of light and by the brilliance of the assembled company,

but I could by no means distinguish the King from any of the rest. Many men, by their gorgeous raiment, might well be the greatest one present; but how to tell?

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A MISSION FROM GOD

All were quiet now. They had fallen a little back, as though to gaze upon the newcomer. Smiling faces were turned upon us. Eager eyes were fastened upon the Maid's face. She stood there, with the glare of the torches shining over her, looking upon the scene with her calm, direct gaze, without tremor of fear or thought of shame.

One of the great Seigneurs—I know not which—came forward with a smile and a bow, and gave her his hand to lead her forward.

"I will present you to the King," he said; and made in a certain direction, as though he would lead her to a very kingly-looking personage in white and crimson velvet, blazing with diamonds; but ere he had taken many steps, the Maid drew her hand from his, and turning herself in a different direction, went forward without the least wavering, and knelt down before a young man in whose attire there was nothing in any way gorgeous or notable.

"Gentle Dauphin," she said, in that clear voice of hers which always made itself heard above other sounds, though at this moment a great hush prevailed throughout the audience chamber, and wondering eyes were fixed full upon the Maid, "God give you good life, and victory over your enemies!"

Astonishment was in the young man's face; but he took the Maid by the hand, and said:

"You mistake, fair damsel; it is not I that am the King. See, he is there; let me take you to him."

But she would not be raised; she knelt still at his feet, and the hand which he had given her she held to her lips.

"Gentle Dauphin, think not to deceive me. I know you, who you are. You are he to whom I am sent, to win you the victory first, and then to place the

crown of France upon your head. It is you, and none other, who shall rule in France!"

The young man's face had changed greatly now. A deep agitation replaced the former smile of mockery and amusement. Several of the courtiers were exchanging meaning glances; in the hush of the hall every spoken word could be heard.

"Child, how dost thou know me?" asked the King, and his voice shook with emotion.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

Her answer was not strange to us, though it might have been so to others.

"I am Jeanne the Maid," she replied, as if in so saying she was saying enough to explain all; "I am sent to you by the King of Heaven; and it is His Word that I have spoken. You shall be crowned and consecrated at Rheims, and shall be lieutenant of the King of Heaven, Who is King of France, but Who wills that you shall reign over that fair realm!"

"Have you a message from Him to me?" asked the King, speaking like a man in a dream.

"Ay, verily I have," answered the Maid, "a message which none but you must hear; for it is to you alone that I may tell it."

Then the King took her by the hand, and raised her up, gazing at her with a great wonder and curiosity; and he led her behind a curtain into a deep recess of the window, where prying eyes could not see them, nor inquisitive ears overhear her words.

And so soon as they had disappeared there, a great hum and buzz of wonder ran throughout the hall, and we saw Sir Guy detach himself from a knot of gay courtiers, and come hastily towards us.

"Is it not wonderful!" he cried. "And I had feared that she would be deceived, and that the mockers would have the laugh against her in the first moment. Though how they looked for her to have knowledge of the King's person I know not. Surely none can doubt but that she is taught by the Spirit of God."

"It was done to prove her!"

"Ay, it was the thought of De la Tremouille, who has ridiculed her pretensions (the word is his) from first to last. But it was a thought

welcomed by all, as a passing merry jest. Thus was it that I was not permitted to come and lead you in.

They did fear lest I should tell what was intended, and describe to the Maid the person or the dress of the King. And now none can doubt; and, in sooth, it may be a wondrous thing for His Majesty himself, and take from him for ever that hateful fear which I always do declare has helped to paralyse him, and hold him back from action."

I lowered my voice to a whisper as I said: 50

"You mean the fear lest he was not the true son of the King?"

"Yes; his wicked mother hinted away her own honour in her desire to rob him of his crown. He has known her for an evil woman. Was it not likely he would fear she might speak truth? Those who know him best know that he has often doubted his right to style himself Dauphin or King; but methinks after today that doubt must needs be set at rest. If the Maid who comes from the King of Heaven puts that name upon him, need he fear to take it for his own?"

As we were thus speaking the Sieur de Boisi joined us. He was perchance more fully in the King's confidence than any other person at Court, and he was kinsman to De Laval, with whom he had plainly already had much talk upon this subject. He drew us aside, and whispered a story in our ears.

"His Majesty did tell it me himself," he said, "for there be nights when he cannot sleep, and he calls me from my couch at his bed's foot, and makes me lie beside him, that we may talk at ease; and he told me, not long since, how that this trouble and doubt were so growing upon him, that once he had fasted for a whole day, and had passed the night upon his knees in the oratory, praying for a sign whereby he might truly know whether he were the real heir, and the kingdom justly his. For that were it not so, he would sooner escape to Spain or Scotland to pass his days in peace; but that if the Lord would send him a sign, then he would seek to do his duty by the realm."

With awe we looked into each other's faces.

"The sign has come!" whispered Bertrand.

"Truly I do think it," answered De Boisi.

"Surely His Majesty will recognise it as such!" said Sir Guy.

"I see not how it can be otherwise; and it will be like a great load lifted from his heart."

"And he will surely hesitate no more," I said, "but will forthwith give her a band of armed men, that she may sally forth to the aid of the beleaguered Orleans!"

But De Boisi and De Laval looked doubtful.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"I know not how that will be. For there are many who will even now seek to dissuade the King, and will talk of witchcraft, and I know not what beside. The Abbes and the Bishops and the priests are alike distrustful and hostile. The Generals of the army openly scoff and jeer. Some say that if the Maid be sent to Orleans, both La Hire and Dunois will forthwith retire, and refuse all further office there. What can a peasant maid know of the art of war? they ask, and how can she command troops and lead them on to victory, where veterans have failed again and again? And then the King knows not what to reply—"

"But she hath given him wherewith to reply!" broke out Bertrand, with indignation in his tones. "She comes not in her own strength, but as the envoy of the King of Heaven. Is that not enough?"

"Enough for us who have seen and heard her," answered Sir Guy; "but will it prove enough for those who only hear of her from others, and who call her a witch, and say that she works by evil spells, and has been sent of the Devil for our deception and destruction and undoing?"

"Then let them send for one of the Generals from Orleans, and let him judge for himself!" cried Bertrand hotly; "you say the city is not so closely blockaded but that with care and caution men may get in or out? Then let some one send and fetch one of these commanders; and if he be not convinced when he sees her, then he will be of very different stuff from all else who have doubted, but whose doubts have been dispelled."

"In faith, that is no bad thought," spoke De Boisi thoughtfully, "and I trow it might be possible of accomplishment. I will certainly speak with the King of it. He is young; he is not firm of purpose; his own heart has never before been set upon his kingdom. One cannot expect a man's nature to change in a day, even though his eyes may have been opened, and his misgivings set at rest. If one of the Generals were won to her side, the troubles that beset us would be well-nigh overcome."

A great clamour of sound from the larger audience chamber, from which we had retired to talk at ease, warned us now that the King and the Maid had appeared from their private conference. His face was very grave, and there was more of earnestness and nobility in his expression than I had thought that countenance capable of expressing. The Maid was pale, as though with deep emotion; but a glorious light shone in her eyes, and when the Court ladies and gallants crowded round her, asking her questions, and gazing upon her as though she 52

were a being from another sphere, she seemed lifted up above them into another region, and though she answered them without fear, she put aside, in some wonderful way, all those questions which were intrusions into holy things, speaking so fearlessly and so simply that all were amazed at her.

She came to us at last, weary, yet glad at heart; and her first question was for her followers, and whether they had been lodged and fed. We supped with her at her request, and in private, and her face was very calm and glad, though she spoke nothing of what had passed between her and the King.

Only when Bertrand said:

“You have done a great work today,” did she look at him with a smile as she replied:

“My work hath but just begun, and may yet be hindered; but have no fear.

The Lord has spoken, and He will bring it to pass. He will not fail us till all be accomplished.”

I have no patience to write of the things which followed. I blush for the King, for his Council, yea, even for the Church itself! Here was a messenger sent from God, sent to France in the hour of her direst need. This messenger had been tried and tested by a score of different methods already, and had in every case come forth from the trial like gold submitted to the fire. Priests had examined and found nothing evil in her. Again and again had she spoken of that which must follow—

and so it had been. If her voices were not from God, then must they be from the devil; yet it had been proved again, and yet again, that this was impossible, since she feared nought that was holy or good, but clave unto such, and was never so joyful and glad at heart as when she was able to receive the Holy Sacrament, or kneel before the Altar of God whilst Mass was being said.

She had proved her claim to be called God's messenger. She had justified herself as such in the eyes of the King and in the judgment of the two Queens and of half the Court. And yet, forsooth, he must waver and doubt, and let himself be led by the counsels of those who had ever set themselves against the Maid and her mission; and to the shame of the Church be it spoken, the Archbishop of Rheims was one of those who most zealously sought to persuade him of the folly of entrusting great matters to the hands of a simple peasant girl, and warned the whole Court of the perils of witchcraft and sorcery which were like to be the undoing of all who meddled therein.

53

A MISSION FROM GOD

I could have wrung the neck of the wily old fox, whom I did more blame than I did his friend and advocate, De la Tremouille; for the latter only professed carnal wisdom and prudence, but the Archbishop spoke as one who has a mandate from God, and he at least should have known better.

And so they must needs send her to Poictiers, to a gathering of ecclesiastics, assembled by her enemy, the Archbishop himself, to examine into her claims to be that which she professed, and also into her past life, and what it had been.

I scarce have patience to write of all the wearisome weeks which were wasted thus, whilst this assembly sat; and the Maid—all alone in her innocence, her purity, her sweetness, and gentle reverence—stood before them, day after day, to answer subtle questions, face a casuistry which sought to entrap her into contradiction or confusion, or to wring from her a confession that she was no heaven-sent messenger, but was led away by her own imaginations and ambi-tions.

It was an ordeal which made even her devoutest adherents tremble; for we knew the astuteness of the churchmen, and how that they would seek to win admissions which they would pervert to their own uses afterwards. Yet we need not have feared; for the Maid's simplicity and perfectly fearless faith in her mission carried her triumphant through all; or perhaps, indeed, her voices whispered to her what answers she should make, for some of them were remembered long, and evoked great wonder in the hearts of those who heard them.

One Dominican monk sought to perplex her by asking why, since God had willed that France should be delivered through her, she had need of armed men?

Full fearlessly and sweetly she looked at him as she made answer:

“It is my Lord’s will that I ask for soldiers, and that the Dauphin shall give me them. The men shall fight; it is God who gives the victory.”

Another rough questioner amongst her judges sought to confuse her by asking what language her voices spoke. They say that a flash flew from her eyes, though her sweet voice was as gentle as ever as she made answer:

“A better language than yours, my father.”

And again, when the same man sought to know more of her faith and her love of God, having shown himself very sceptical of her voices and visions, she 54

answered him, with grave dignity and an earnest, steadfast gaze:

“I trow I have a better faith than yours, my father.”

And so, through all, her courage never failed, her faith never faltered, her hope shone undimmed.

“They must give me that which I ask; they cannot withstand God. They cannot hurt me. For this work was I born, and until it be accomplished I am safe. I have no fear.”

Only once did she show anger, and then it was with a quiet dignity of displeasure, far removed from petulance or impatience. They asked of her a sign that she was what she professed to be.

“I have not come to Poictiers to give a sign,” she answered, holding her head high, and looking fearlessly into the faces of those who sat to judge her.

“Send me to Orleans, with as small a band as you will. But send me there, and you shall see signs and to spare that I come in the power of the King of Heaven.”

And so in the end her faith and courage triumphed. The verdict ran somewhat thus:

"We have found in her nothing but what is good. To deny or hinder her intentions to serve the King would be to show ourselves unworthy of the assistance of God."

Yes, they had to come to it; and I trust that there were many sitting there whose hearts smote them for ever having doubted, or sought to baffle or entrap her. I cannot tell how far the judges were moved by the growing feeling in the town and throughout the district. But the people crowded to see the Maid pass by, and all were ready to fall at her feet and worship her. In the evenings they visited her at the house of Jean Ratabeau, the Advocate General, whose wife formed for her (as did every good and true woman with whom she came into contact during her life) an ardent admiration and affection.

And to their earnest questions she gave ready answer, sitting in the midst of an eager crowd, and telling them in her sweet and simple way the story of her life in Domremy, and how she had first heard these voices from Heaven, or seen wondrous visions of unspeakable glories; and how she had learnt, by slow degrees, that which her Lord had for her to do, and had lost, by little and little, the 55

fear which first possessed her, till now she knew not of the name of the word. She had but to follow where her voices guided.

And the people believed in her, heart and soul. Her fame spread far and wide, and had she lifted but a finger, she might have been at the head of an armed band of citizens and soldiers, yea, and many gentlemen and knights as well, all vowed to live and die in her service. But this was not what was her destiny.

"I thank you, my friends," she would say, if such a step were proposed by any ardent soul, impatient of this long delay; "but thus it may not be. My Lord has decreed that the Dauphin shall send me forth at the head of his armies, and with a troop of his soldiers; and he will do this ere long. Be not afraid. We must needs have patience, as did our Lord Himself, and be

obedient, as He was. For only as we look to Him for grace and guidance can we hope to do His perfect will."

Thus spoke the Maid, who, being without letters, and knowing, as she said, no prayers save the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Credo, yet could speak in such fashion to those who sought her. Was it wonder that the people believed in her?

that they would have been ready to tear in pieces any who durst contemn her mission, or declare her possessed of evil spirits?

Yet I will not say that it was fear which possessed the hearts of her judges, and decided their ruling in this matter. I trow they could not look upon her, or hear her, without conviction of heart. Nevertheless it is possible that the respect for popular enthusiasm led them to speak in such high praise of the Maid, and to add that she was in the right in assuming the dress which she wore. For she had been sent to do man's work, and for this a man's garb was the only fitting one to wear. And this ruling was heard with great acclamation of satisfaction; for her dress had been almost more commented upon than any other matter by some, and that the Church had set its sanction upon that which common sense deemed most right and fitting, robbed the most doubtful of all scruple, and gave to the Maid herself no small pleasure.

"I do in this, as in all other things, that which I have been bidden," she said.

"But I would not willingly act unseemly in the eyes of good men and virtuous women; wherefore I am glad that my judges have spoken thus, and I thank them from my heart for their gentle treatment of me."

It was ever thus with the Maid. No anger or impatience overset her sweet serenity and humility. She would not let herself take offence, or resent these ordeals to which, time after time, she was subjected. Nay, it was she who defended 56

the proceedings when we attacked them, saying that it behoved men to act with care and caution in these great matters, and that her only trouble in the

delay was the sufferings and sorrows of the poor beleaguered garrison and citizens in Orleans, to whose help and relief she longed to fly.

So certain was she that before long she would be upon her way, that at Poictiers she composed that letter to the English King, his Regent, and his Generals which has been so much talked of since. It was a truly wonderful document to be penned by a village maiden; for in it she adjured them to cease from warring with the rightful King of France, whom God would have to rule the realm for Him, to go back to their own country, leaving peace behind them instead of war, and imploring them then to join with the King of France in a crusade against the Saracens. She speaks of herself as one who has power to drive them from the kingdom if they will not go in peace as adjured. Calling herself throughout "The Maid," she tells them plainly that they will not be able to stand against her; that she will come against them in the power of the King of Heaven, Who will give to her more strength than ever can be brought against her; and in particular she begs of them to retire from the city of Orleans; else, if they do not, they shall come to great misfortune there.

This letter took some time in the composition, and was written for her by Sir Guy de Laval, though we were all in her counsel as she dictated it.

By this I do not mean that we advised her. On the contrary, we gazed at her amazed, knowing how fruitless such an injunction must be to the haughty victorious nation, who had us, so to speak, in the dust at her feet. But the Maid saw with other eyes than ours.

"It may be that there will be some holy man of God in their camp to whom my Lord will reveal His will, as He hath done to me, and will show the things which must come to pass. I would so willingly spare all the bloodshed and misery which war will bring. It is so terrible a thing for Christian men to war one with another!"

So this letter, with its superscription "JHESUS MARIA," was written and dispatched to the English, and the Maid turned her attention to other matters near her heart, such as the design and execution of those banners which were to be carried before her armies in battle, and lead them on to victory. And these same words, "Jhesus Maria," she decreed should appear upon each of

the three standards, in token that she went not forth in her own strength, nor even in that of the King of France; but in the power which was from above, and in the strength given by those who sent her.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

Now there came to Poictiers to see the Maid at this time many persons from other places, and amongst these was a Scotchman called Hauves Polnoir, who brought with him his daughter, a fair girl, between whom and the Maid a great love speedily sprang up. These Polnoirs were the most skilful workers in embroideries and such like of all the country round, and to them was entrusted the making of the three banners, according to the instructions of the Maid.

There was first the great white silken standard, with the golden fleur-de-lys of France, and a representation on the reverse of the Almighty God between two adoring angels; then a smaller banner, with a device representing the An-nunciation, which she always gave to one of her immediate attendants or squires to carry into battle; and for herself she had a little triangular banneret of white, with an image of the Crucified Christ upon it, and this she carried herself, and it was destined to be the rallying point of innumerable engagements, for the sight of that little fluttering pennon showed the soldiers where the Maid was leading them, and though this was in the thickest and sorest of the strife, they would press towards it with shouts of joy and triumph, knowing that, where the Maid led, there victory was won.

All these matters were arranged whilst we were kept in waiting at Poictiers; and the Polnoirs returned to Tours to execute the orders there in their own work-shop. The Maid promised to visit them on her way from Chinon to Orleans, and so bid them a kindly farewell. Perhaps I may here add that when the Dauphin, upon his coronation, insisted upon presenting the Maid with a sum of money, the use she made of it, after offering at various shrines, was to provide a marriage dowry for Janet Polnoir. Never did she think of herself; never did she desire this world's goods.

This was shown very plainly upon her triumphant return to Chinon, with the blessing and sanction of the Church upon her mission, with the enthusiasm of the people growing and increasing every day, and her fame flying throughout the length and breadth of the realm. By this time the King and all

his Court knew that a deliverer had been raised up in our midst, and instead of lowly lodgings being allotted to the Maid and her train, the whole Tower of Coudray was set apart for the use of herself and her suite. The custodian De Belier and his wife had charge of her, and to her were now appointed a staff, of which the brave Jean d'Aulon was the chief, and to which Bertrand and Sir Guy de Laval and myself belonged, together with many more knights and gentlemen, all anxious to do service under her banner. Also she had in her train some persons of lowlier degree, such as her brothers, for whom she always had tender care, and who believed devoutly in 58

her mission, although they saw of necessity less and less of one another as the Maid's mission progressed, and took her into a different world.

But all this grandeur was no delight to her, save inasmuch as it showed that at last her mission was recognised and honoured. When asked what she would have for herself in the matter of dress and armour, her answer was that she had already all she required, although she only possessed at this time one suit more than she had started forth with from Vaucouleurs. Although she saw the courtiers fluttering about like butterflies, and noted how men, as well as women, decked themselves in choice stuffs and flashing jewels, she asked none of these things for herself; and when the Queen of Sicily, always her best and kindest friend, sent to her some clothing of her own designing—all white, and beautifully worked, some with silver, and some with gold thread and cord, and a mantle of white velvet, lined with cloth of silver—she looked at the beautiful garments with something between a smile and a sigh; then turning towards the great lady who stood by to watch her, she first kissed her hand, and then, with a sudden impulse of affection, put her arms about her neck, and was drawn into a close embrace.

"Are you not pleased with them, my child?" spoke Queen Yolande gently;

"they would have decked you in all the colours of the rainbow, and made you to blaze with jewels; but I would not have it The Virgin Maid, I told them, should be clad all in white, and my word prevailed, and thus you see your snowy raiment. I had thought you would be pleased with it, ma mie."

“Madame, it is beautiful; I have never dreamed of such. It is too fine, too costly for such as I. I am but a peasant maid—”

“You are the chosen of the King of Heaven, my child. You must think also of that. You are now the leader of the King’s armies. You have to do honour alike to a Heavenly and an earthly Monarch; and shall we let our champion go forth without such raiment as is fitting to her mission?”

Then the Maid bent her head, and answered with sweet gladness:

“If it is thus that the world regards me, I will wear these trappings with a glad and thankful heart; for in sooth I would seek to do honour to His Majesty. As for my Lord in the Heavens, I trow that He doth look beneath such matters of gay adornment; yet even so, I would have His mission honoured in the sight of all men, and His messenger fitly arrayed.”

So the Maid put on her spotless apparel, and looked more than ever like a 59

youthful warrior, going forth with stainless shield, in the quest of chivalrous adventure. The whole Court was entranced by her beauty, her lofty dignity, her strange air of aloofness from the world, which made her move amongst them as a thing apart, and seemed to set a seal upon her every word and act.

When she spoke of the coming strife, and her plans for the relief of the beleaguered city, her eyes would shine, a ringing note of authority would be heard in her voice, she would fearlessly enter into debate with the King and his Ministers, and tell them that which she was resolved to do, whether they counselled it or no. At such moments she appeared gifted with a power impossible rightly to describe. Without setting herself up in haughtiness, she yet overbore all opposition by her serene composure and calm serenity in the result. Men of war said that she spoke like a soldier and a strategist; they listened to her in amaze, and wondered what the great La Hire would say when he should arrive, to find that a country maiden had been set over his head.

In other matters, too, the Maid knew her mind, and spoke it with calm decision. The Queen of Sicily had not been content with ordering the Maid's dress alone, she had also given orders to the first armourer in Tours to fashion her a suit of light armour for the coming strife. This armour was of white metal, and richly inlaid with silver, so that when the sun glinted upon it, it shone with a dazzling white radiance, almost blinding to behold. The King, also, resolved to do his share, had ordered for her a light sword, with a blade of Toledo steel; but though the Maid gratefully accepted the gift of the white armour, and appeared before all the Court attired therein, and with her headpiece, with its floating white plumes crowning it all, yet, as she made her reverence before the King, she gently put aside his gift of the sword.

"Gentle Dauphin," she said, "I thank you from my heart; but for me there is another sword which I must needs carry with me into battle; and I pray you give me leave to send and fetch it from where it lies unknown and forgotten."

"Why, Maiden, of what speak you?" he answered; "is not this jewelled weapon good enough? You will find its temper of the best. I know not where you will find a better!"

"No better a sword, Sire," she answered; "and yet the one which I must use; for so it hath been told me of my Lord. In the church of Fierbois, six leagues from hence, beneath the high altar, there lies a sword, and this sword must I use.

Suffer me, I pray you, to send and fetch it thence. Then shall I be ready and equipped to sally forth against the foes of my country."

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A MISSION FROM GOD

“But who has told you of this sword, my maiden?”

“My Lord did tell me of it, as I knelt before the altar, ere I came to Chinon.

It is in the church of St. Catherine; and suffer only my good knight, Jean de Metz, to go and make search for it, and he will surely bring it hither to me.”

Now I did well remember how, as we knelt in the church at Fierbois in the dimness of the early morn, the Maid had received some message, unheard by those beside her; and gladly did I set forth upon mine errand to seek and bring to her this sword.

When I reached Fierbois, which was in the forenoon of the day following, the good priests of the church knew nothing of any such sword; but the fame of the Maid having reached their ears, they were proud and glad that their church of St.

Catherine should be honoured thus, and calling together some workmen, they made careful search, and sure enough, before we had dug deep, the spade struck and clinked against metal, and forth from beneath the altar we drew a sword, once a strong and well-tempered weapon, doubtless, but now covered with rust, so that the good priests looked askance at it, and begged to have it to cleanse and polish.

It was then too late for my return the same day, so I left it to them, and lodged me in the town, where all the people flocked to hear news of the Maid and of the coming campaign.

Then in the morning, with the first of the light, the sword was brought to me; and surely many persons in Fierbois must have sat up all the night, for every speck of rust had been cleansed away, and a velvet scabbard made or found for the weapon, which the priests begged of me to take with it to the Maid as their gift, and with their benediction upon it and her.

My return was awaited with some stir of interest, and before I had well dismounted I was hurried, all travel stained as I was, into the presence of the King.

There was the Maid waiting also, calm and serene, and when she saw the thing which I carried in my hands, her face lighted; she took several steps forward, and bent her knee as she reverently took the sword, as though she received it from some Higher Power.

“It was even as she said?” questioned the King, quickly.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"Even so, Sire; the sword of which no man knew aught, was lying buried beneath the high altar of St. Catherine's Church, in Fierbois."

A murmur of surprise and gratification ran through the assembly. But there was no surprise upon the Maid's face.

"Did you doubt, Sire?" she asked, and he could not meet the glance of her clear eyes.

Methinks the Maid loved that ancient sword better than all her shining armour of silver! Strange to say, the jewelled sheath of the King's Toledo blade fitted the weapon from Fierbois, and he supplemented the priests' gift of a scabbard by this second rich one. The Maid accepted it with graceful thanks; yet both the gorgeous cases were laid away, and a simple sheath of leather made; for the sword was to be carried at her side into battle, and neither white nor crimson velvet was suited to such a purpose.

Nor would the Maid let us have her sword sharpened for her. A curious look came upon her face as Bertrand pointed out that although now clean and shining, its edges were too blunt for real use. She looked round upon us as we stood before her, and passed her fingers lovingly down the edges of the weapon.

"I will keep it as it is," she answered; "for though I must needs carry it into battle with me, I pray my Lord that it may never be my duty to shed Christian blood. And if the English King will but listen to the words of counsel which I have sent to him, perchance it may even now be that bloodshed will be spared."

In sooth, I believe that she would far rather have seen the enemy disperse of their own accord, than win the honour and glory of the campaign, which she knew beforehand would bring to her renown, the like of which no woman in the world's history has ever won. She would have gone back gladly, I truly

believe, to her home in Domremy, and uttered no plaint, even though men ceased after the event to give her the praise and glory; for herself she never desired such.

But we, who knew the temper of the English, were well aware that this would never be. Even though they might by this time have heard somewhat of the strange thing which had happened, and how the French were rallying round the standard of the Angelic Maid, yet would they not readily believe that their crushed and beaten foes would have power to stand against them. More ready would they be to scoff than to fear.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

Now, at last, after all these many hindrances and delays, all was in readiness for the start. April had well nigh run its course, and nature was looking her gayest and loveliest when the day came that we marched forth out of the Castle of Chinon, a gallant little army, with the Maid in her shining white armour and her fluttering white pennon at our head, and took the road to Tours, where the great and redoubtable La Hire was to meet us, and where we were to find a great band of recruits and soldiers, all eager now to be led against the foe.

Much did we wonder how the Generals of the French army would receive the Maid, set, in a sense, over them as Commander-in-Chief of this expedition, with a mandate from the King that she was to be obeyed, and that her counsels and directions were to be followed. We heard conflicting rumours on this score.

There were those who declared that so desperate was the condition of the city, and so disheartened the garrison and citizens that they welcomed with joy the thought of this deliverer, and believed already that she was sent of God for their succour and salvation. Others, on the contrary, averred that the officers of the army laughed to scorn the thought of being aided or led by a woman—a peasant—une peronelle de bas lieu, as they scornfully called her—and that they would never permit themselves to be led or guided by one who could have no knowledge of war, even though she might be able to read the secrets of the future.

In spite of what had been now ruled by the Church concerning her, there were always those, both in the French and English camps, who called her a witch; and we, who heard so many flying rumours, wondered greatly what view the redoubtable La Hire took of this matter, and Dunois, the Bastard of Orleans, as he was often called. For these two men, with Xaintrailles, were the ruling Generals in Orleans, and their voice would be paramount with the army there, and would carry much weight with those reinforcements for the relieving force which we were to find awaiting us at Tours and at Blois.

Now La Hire, as all men know, was a man of great renown, and of immense personal weight and influence. He was a giant in stature, with a voice like a trumpet, and thews of steel; a mighty man in battle, a daring leader, yet cautious and sagacious withal; a man feared and beloved by those whom he led in warfare; a gay roysterer at other times, with as many strange oaths upon his lips as there are saints in the calendar; what the English call a swashbuckler and daredevil; a man whom one would little look to be led or guided by a woman, for he was impatient of counsel, and headstrong alike in thought and action.

And this was the man who was to meet us at Tours, form his impression of the Maid, and throw the great weight of his personal influence either into one 63

scale or the other. Truth to tell, I was something nervous of this ordeal, and there were many who shared my doubts and fears. But the Maid rode onward, serene and calm, the light of joy and hope in her eyes, untroubled by any doubts. At last she was on her way to the relief of the beleaguered city; there was no room for misgiving in her faithful heart.

We entered Tours amid the clashing of joy bells, the plaudits of the soldiers, and the laughter, the weeping, the blessings of an excited populace, who regarded the Maid as the saviour of the realm. They crowded to their windows and waved flags and kerchiefs. They thronged upon her in the streets to gaze at her fair face and greet her as a deliverer.

It was indeed a moving scene; but she rode through it, calm and tranquil, pausing in the press to speak a few words of thanks and greeting, but preserving always her gentle maidenly air of dignity and reserve. And so we came to the house which had been set apart for her use on her stay, and there we saw, standing at the foot of the steps which led from the courtyard into the house, a mighty, mailed figure, the headpiece alone lacking of his full armour, a carven warrior, as it seemed, with folded arms and bent brows, gazing upon us as we filed in under the archway, but making no move to approach us.

I did not need the whisper which ran through the ranks of our escort to know that this man was the great and valiant La Hire.

As the Maid's charger paused at the foot of the steps, this man strode forward with his hand upraised as in a salute, and giving her his arm, he assisted her to alight, and for a few moments the two stood looking into each other's eyes with mutual recognition, taking, as it were, each the measure of the other.

The Maid was the first to speak, her eyes lighting with that deep down, indescribable smile, which she kept for her friends alone. When I saw that smile in her eyes, as they were upraised to La Hire's face, all my fears vanished in a moment.

"You are the Dauphin's brave General La Hire, from Orleans," she said; "I thank you, monsieur, for your courtesy in coming thus to meet me. For so can we take counsel together how best the enemies of our country may be overthrown."

"You are the Maid, sent of God and the King for the deliverance of the realm," answered La Hire, as he lifted her hand to his lips, "I bid you welcome in the name of Orleans, its soldiers, and its citizens. For we have been like men be-64

neath a spell—a spell too strong for us to break. You come to snap the spell, to break the yoke, and therefore I bid you great welcome on the part of myself and the citizens and soldiers of Orleans. Without your counsels to His Majesty, and the aid you have persuaded him to send, the city must assuredly have fallen ere this.

Only the knowledge that help was surely coming has kept us from surrender."

"I would the help had come sooner, my General," spoke the Maid; "but soon or late it is one with my Lord, who will give us the promised victory."

From that moment friendship, warm and true, was established betwixt the bronzed warrior and the gentle Maid, who took up, as by natural right, her position of equal—indeed, of superior—in command, not with any haughty assump-tion, not with any arrogant words or looks, but sweetly and simply, as though there were no question but that the place was hers; that to her belonged the ordering of the forces, the overlooking of all. Again and again, even we, who had come to believe so truly in her divine commission, were astonished at the insight she showed, the sagacity of her counsels, the wonderful authority she was able to exert over the soldiers brought together, a rude, untrained, insubordinate mass of men, collected from all ranks and classes of the people, some being little better than bands of marauders, living on prey and plunder, since of regular fighting there had been little of late; others, mercenaries hired by the nobles to swell their own retinues; many raw recruits, fired by ardour at the thought of the promised deliverance; a few regular trained bands, with their own officers in command, but forming altogether a heterogeneous company, by no means easy to drill into order, and swelled by another contingent at Blois, of very much the same material.

But the Maid assembled the army together, and thus addressed them. At least, this was the substance of her words; nothing can reproduce the wonderful earnestness and power of her voice and look, for her face kindled as she spoke, and the sunshine playing upon her as she sat her charger in the glory of her silver armour, seemed to encompass her with a pure white light, so that men's eyes were dazzled as they looked upon her, and they whispered one to the other:

"The Angelic Maid! The Angelic Maid! surely it is an Angel of God come straight down from Heaven to aid and lead us."

"My friends," she spoke, and her voice carried easily to every corner of the great square, packed with a human mass, motionless, hanging upon her words;

"My friends, we are about to start forth upon a crusade as holy as it is possible for men to be concerned in, for it is as saviours and deliverers of your brethren and our country that we go; and the Lord of Hosts is with us. He has bidden us march, 65

and He has promised to go with us, even as He was with the Israelites of old. And if we do not see His presence in pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night, we yet do know and feel Him near us; and He will give abundant proof that He fights upon our side!"

She lifted her face for a moment to the sky. She was bareheaded, and every head was bared in that vast crowd as she uttered the name of the Most High. It seemed as though a light from Heaven fell upon her as she spoke, and a deep murmur ran through the throng. It was as if they answered that they needed no other vision than that of the Maid herself.

"If then the Lord be with us, must we not show ourselves worthy of His holy presence in our midst? O my friends, since I have been with you these few days, my heart has been pained and grieved by that which I have heard and seen. Oaths and blasphemies fall from your lips, and you scarce know it yourselves. Drunken-ness and vice prevail. O my friends, let this no longer be amongst us! Let us cleanse ourselves from all impurities; let our conversation be yea, yea, nay, nay. Let none take the name of the Lord in vain, nor soil His holy cause by vice and uncleanness.

O let us all, day by day, as the sun rises anew each morning, assemble to hear Mass, and to receive the Holy Sacrament. Let every man make his confession.

Holy priests are with us to hear all, and to give absolution. Let us start forth upon the morrow purified and blessed of God, and let us day by day renew that holy cleansing and blessing, that the Lord may indeed be with us and rest amongst us, and that His heart be not grieved and burdened by that which He shall see and hear amongst those to whom He has promised His help and blessing!"

Thus she spoke; and a deep silence fell upon all, in the which it seemed to me the fall of a pin might have been heard. The Maid sat quite still for a moment, her own head bent as though in prayer. Then she lifted it, and a radiant smile passed over her face, a smile as of assurance and thankful joy. She raised her hand and waved it, almost as though she blessed, whilst she

greeted her soldiers, and then she turned her horse, the crowd making way for her in deep reverential silence, and rode towards her own lodging, where she remained shut up in her own room for the rest of the day.

But upon the following morning a strange thing had happened. Every single camp follower—all the women and all the disorderly rabble that hangs upon the march of an army—had disappeared. They had slunk off in the night, and were utterly gone. The soldiers were gathered in the churches to hear Mass. All that could do so attended where it was known the Maid would be, and when she had received the Sacrament herself, hundreds crowded to do the like; and I suppose 66

there were thousands in the city that day, who, having confessed and received absolution, received the pledge of the Lord's death, though perhaps some of them had not thought of such a duty for years and years.

And here I may say that this was not an act for once and all. Day by day in the camp Mass was celebrated, and the Holy Sacrament given to all who asked and came. The Maid ever sought to begin the day thus, and we of her personal household generally followed her example. Even La Hire would come and kneel beside her, a little behind, though it was some while before he desired to partake of the Sacrament himself. But to be near her in this act of devotion seemed to give him joy and confidence and for her sake, because he saw it pained her, he sought to break off his habit of profane swearing, and the use of those strange oaths before which men had been wont to quake.

And she, seeing how sorely tried he was to keep from his accustomed habit, did come to his aid with one of her frank and almost boy-like smiles, and told him that he might swear by his baton if he needs must use some expletive; but that no holy name must lightly pass his lips.

Strange indeed was it to see the friendship which had so quickly sprung up between that rough warrior and the Maid, whom he could almost have crushed to death between his mighty hands.

If all the Generals in the army were as noble minded as he, and as ready to receive her whom God had sent them, we should have little to fear; but there was Dunois yet to reckon with, who had promised to come forth and meet her outside the town (for the blockade, as I have before said, was not perfect; and on the south side men could still come and go with caution and care), and to lead her in triumph within its walls, if the English showed not too great resistance.

But even now we were to find how that they did not yet trust the Maid's authority as it should be trusted; and even La Hire was in fault here, as afterwards he freely owned. For the Maid had told them to lead her to the city on the north side, as her plan was to strike straight through the English lines, and scatter the besieging force ere ever she entered the town at all. But since the city lies to the north of the river, and the English had built around it twelve great bastilles, as they called them, and lay in all their strength on this side, it seemed too venture-some to attack in such a manner; and in this La Hire and Dunois were both agreed.

But La Hire did not tell the Maid of any disagreements, but knowing the country to be strange to her, he led her and the army by a route which she believed the right one, till suddenly we beheld the towers of Orleans and the great surrounding 67

fortifications rising up before our eyes; and, behold! the wide river with its bridge more than half destroyed, lay between us and our goal!

At this sight the eyes of the Maid flashed fire, and she turned them upon La Hire, but spoke never a word. His face flushed a dull crimson with a sudden, unexpected shame. To do him justice be it said, that (as we later heard) he had been against this deception after having seen the Maid; but there were now many notable generals and marshals and officers with the army, all of whom were resolved upon this course of action, which had been agreed upon beforehand with Dunois, and they had overborne his objections, which were something faint-hearted perhaps, for with his love and admiration for the Maid, he trembled, as he now explained to her, to lead her by so perilous a route, and declared that she could well be conducted into the city through

the Burgundy gate, by water, without striking a blow, instead of having to fight her way in past the English bastions.

“I thank you for your care for me, my friend,” she answered, “but it were better to have obeyed my voice. The English arrows could not have touched me.

We should have entered unopposed. Now much precious time must needs be lost, for how can this great army be transported across yonder river?—and the bridge, even if we could dislodge the English from the tower of Les Tourelles, is broken down and useless.”

Indeed it seemed plain to all that the Generals had made a great blunder; for though we marched on to Checy, where Dunois met us, and whence some of the provisions brought for the starving city could be dispatched in the boats assembled there, it was plain that there was no transport sufficient for the bulk of the army; and the Maid, as she and Dunois stood face to face, at last regarded him with a look of grave and searching scrutiny.

“Are you he whom men call the Bastard of Orleans?”

“Lady, I am; and I come to welcome you with gladness, for we are sore beset by our foes; yet all within the city are taking heart of grace, believing that a Deliverer from Heaven has been sent to them.”

“They think well,” answered the Maid, “and right glad am I to come. But wherefore have I been led hither by this bank, instead of the one upon which Talbot and his English lie?”

“Lady, the wisest of our leaders held that this would be the safest way.”

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A MISSION FROM GOD

“The counsel of God and our Lord is more sure and more powerful than that of generals and soldiers,” she answered gravely. “You have made an error in this. See to it that such error be not repeated. I will that in all things my Lord be obeyed.”

The Generals stood dumb and discomfited before her; a thrill ran through the army when her words were repeated there; but, indeed, we all quickly saw the wisdom of her counsel and the folly of her adversaries; for the bulk of the army had perforce to march back to Blois to cross the river there, whilst only a thousand picked men with the chiefest of the Generals and the convoys of provisions prepared to enter the city by water and pass through the Burgundy Gate.

At the first it seemed as though even this would be a dangerous task, for the wind blew hard in a contrary direction, and the deeply-laden boats began to be in peril of foundering. But as we stood watching them from the bank, and saw their jeopardy, and some were for recalling them and waiting, the Maid’s voice suddenly rang forth in command:

“Leave them alone, and hasten forward with the others. The wind will change, and a favouring breeze shall carry us all safe into the city. The English shall not fire a shot to hinder us, for the fear of the Maid has fallen upon them!”

We gazed at her in wonder as she stood a little apart, her face full of power and calm certainty. And indeed, it was but a very few minutes later that the wind dropped to a dead calm, and a light air sprang up from a contrary direction, and the laden boats gladly spreading sail, floated quietly onwards with their precious load towards the suffering city.

Then we embarked, somewhat silently, for the awe which fell upon those who had never seen the Maid before, extended even to us. Moreover, with those frowning towers of the English so close upon us, crowded with

soldiers who seemed to know what was happening, and who were coming into Orleans, it was scarce possible not to look for resistance and hostile attack.

But curious as it may seem, not a shot was fired as we passed along. A silence strange and sinister seemed to hang over the lines of the enemy; but when we reached the city how all was changed!

It was about eight o'clock in the evening when at last we finished our journey by water and land, and entered the devoted town. There the chiefest citizens came hurrying to meet us, leading a white charger for their Deliverer to ride upon.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

And when she was mounted, the people thronged about her weeping and shouting, blessing and hailing her as their champion and saviour. The streets were thronged with pale-faced men; women and children hung from the windows, showering flowers at our feet. Torches lit up the darkening scene, and shone from the breastplates and headpieces of the mailed men. But the Maid in her white armour seemed like a being from another sphere; and the cry of "St. Michael! St. Michael himself!" resounded on all sides, and one did not wonder.

Nothing would serve the Maid but to go straight to the Cathedral first, and offer thanksgiving for her arrival here, and the people flocked with her, till the great building was filled to overflowing with her retinue of soldiers and her self-constituted followers. Some begged of her to address them from the steps at the conclusion of the brief service, but she shook her head.

"I have no words for them—only I love them all," she answered, with a little natural quiver of emotion in her voice. "Tell them so, and that I have come to save them. And then let me go home."

So La Hire stood forth and gave the Maid's message in his trumpet tones, and the Maid was escorted by the whole of the joyful and loving crowd to the house of the Treasurer Boucher, where were her quarters, and where she was received with acclamation and joy. And thus the Maid entered the beleaguered city of Orleans.

The house of the Treasurer was a beautiful building in the Gothic style, and weary as was the Maid with the toils and excitements through which she had passed, I saw her eyes kindle with pleasure and admiration as she was ceremoniously led into the great banqueting hall, where the tables were spread with abundant good cheer (despite the reduced condition of the city), to do honour to her who came as its Deliverer.

There was something solemn and church-like in these surroundings which appealed at once to the Maid. She had a keen eye for beauty, whether of nature or in the handiwork of man, and her quick penetrating glances missed nothing of the stately grandeur of the house, the ceremonious and courtly welcome of the Treasurer, its master, or the earnest, wistful gaze of his little daughter Charlotte, who stood holding fast to her mother's hand in the background, but feasting her great dark eyes upon the wonderful shining figure of the Maid, from whose white armour the lights of the great hall flashed back in a hundred points of fire.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

The greeting of the master of the house being over, the Maid threw off for a moment the grave dignity of her bearing throughout this trying day, and became a simple girl again. With a quick grace of movement she crossed the space which divided her from the little child, and kneeling suddenly down, took the wondering little one in her arms, and held her in a close embrace.

"Ma petite, ma mie, ma tres chere," those nearest heard her murmur. "Love me, darling, love me! I have a little sister at home who loves me, but I had to go away and leave her. Perhaps I may never see her again. Try to love me instead, and comfort my heart, for sometimes I am very, very weary, and hungry for the love that I have lost!"

Now, one might have thought that so young a child—for she was not more than eight years old, and small for her years—would have been affrighted at the sudden approach of the shining warrior, about whom so many stories had been told, and who looked more like the Archangel Michael, as many thought, than a creature of human flesh and blood. But instead of showing any fear, the child flung her arms about the neck of the Maid, and pressed kisses upon her face—her headpiece she had removed at her entrance—and when the mother would have loosened her hold, and sent the child away with her attendant, little Charlotte resisted, clinging to her new friend with all her baby strength, and the Maid looked pleadingly up into the kindly face of the lady, and said:

"Ah, madame, I pray you let her remain with me. It is so long since I felt the arms of a child about my neck!"

And so the little one stayed to the banquet, and was given the place of honour beside the Maid. But neither of these twain had any relish for the dainty meats and rich dishes served for us. As on the march, so now in the walls of the city, the Maid fared as simply as the rudest of her soldiers. She mixed water with her wine, took little save a slice or two of bread, and though to please her hosts she just touched one or two specially prepared

dishes, it was without any real relish for them, and she was evidently glad when she was able to make excuse to leave the table and go to the room prepared for her.

But here again she showed her simple tastes, for when the great guest chamber was shown her she shrank a little at its size and luxury, and, still holding the child's hand in hers, she turned to the mother who was in attendance and said:

"I pray you, sweet lady, let me whilst I am your guest share the room of this little daughter of yours. I am but a simple country girl, all this grandeur weighs 71

me down. If I might but sleep with this little one in my arms—as the little sister at home loved to lie—I should sleep so peacefully and have such happy dreams! Ah, madame!—let me have my will in this!"

And Madame Boucher, being a mother and a true woman, understood; and answered by taking the Maid in her arms and kissing her. And so, as long as the Maid remained in Orleans, she shared the little white bedroom of the child of the house, which opened from that of the mother, and the bond which grew up between the three was so close and tender a one, that I trow the good Treasurer and his wife would fain have regarded this wonderful Maid as their own daughter, and kept her ever with them, had duty and her voices not called her elsewhere when the first part of her task was done.

Now Bertrand and I, together with Pierre, her brother, and the Chevalier d'Aulon and Sir Guy de Laval, were lodged in the same house, and entertained most hospitably by the Treasurer, who sat up with us far into the night after our arrival, listening with earnest attention to all we could tell him respecting the Maid, and telling us on his part of the feeling in Orleans anent her and her mission, and what we might expect to follow her arrival here.

"The townsfolk seem well-nigh wild for joy at sight of her," spoke De Laval,

“and the more they see of her, the more they will love her and reverence her mission. I was one who did openly scoff, or at least had no faith in any miracle, until that I saw her with mine own eyes; and then some voice in my heart—I know not how to speak more plainly of it—or some wonderful power in her glance or in her voice, overcame me. And I knew that she had in very truth come from God, and I have never doubted of her divine commission from that day to this. It will be the same here in Orleans, if, indeed, there be any that doubt.”

“Alas! there are—too many!” spoke the Treasurer, shaking his head, “I am rejoiced that our two greatest Generals, Dunois and La Hire, have become her adherents, for I myself believe that she has been sent of God for our deliverance, and so do the townsfolk almost to a man. But there are numbers of the lesser officers—bold men and true—who have fought valiantly throughout the siege, and who have great influence with the soldiers they lead, and these men are full of disgust at the thought of being led by a woman—a girl—and one of low degree.

They would be willing for her to stand aloft and prophesy victory for their arms, but that she should arm herself and lead them in battle, and direct operations herself, fills them with disgust and contempt. There is like to be trouble, I fear, with some of these. There is bold De Gamache, for example, who declares he would sooner fold up his banner and serve as a simple soldier in the ranks, than 72

hold a command subservient to that of a low-born woman!”

That name as applied to the Angelic Maid set our teeth on edge; yet was it wonderful that some should so regard her?

“Let them but see her—and they will change their tune!” spake Bertrand quickly. “A low-born woman! Would they speak thus of the Blessed Virgin? And yet according to the wisdom of the flesh it would be as true of one as of the other.”

The Treasurer spoke with grave thoughtfulness:

“Truly do I think that any person honoured by the Lord with a direct mission from Himself becomes something different by virtue of that mission from what he or she was before. Yet we may not confound this mission of the Maid here in Orleans with that one which came to the Blessed Mary.”

“Nor had I any thought,” answered Bertrand, “of likening one to the other, save inasmuch as both have been maidens, born in lowly surroundings, yet chosen for purity of heart and life, and for childlike faith and obedience, for the honour of receiving a divine commission. There the parallel stops; for there can be no comparison regarding the work appointed to each. Yet even as this Maid shall fulfil her appointed task in obedience to the injunctions received, she is worthy to be called the handmaid of the Lord.”

“To that I have nought to say but yea,” answered the Treasurer heartily,

“and I pray our Lord and the Blessed Virgin to be with her and strengthen her, for I fear me she will have foes to contend with from within as well as from without the city; and as all men know, it is the distrust and contradiction of so-called friends which is harder to bear than the open enmity of the foe.”

It was difficult for us, vowed heart and soul to the cause of the Maid, and honoured by her friendship and confidence, to believe that any could be so blind as not to recognise in her a God-sent messenger, whom they would delight to follow and to honour. Yet when I walked out upon the following morning—a sunny first of May—to have a good look round at the position of the fortifications, the ring of English bastilles to the north, the blockading towers upon the southern bank, I was quickly aware of a great deal of talk going on amongst the soldiers and the officers which was by no means favourable to the cause of the Maid.

Voices were hushed somewhat at my approach, for though none knew me, I was of course a stranger, and therefore likely to have entered the town in the

train of the Maid, who had yesterday made her appearance there. But I heard enough to be sure that what the Treasurer had said last evening was likely to be true. The soldiers were disposed to scoff at being led by a woman, and the officers to grumble at having had to bear all the burden of the long siege, and then when the King did send an army for the relief, to send it under the command of this Maid, who would bear away the honour and glory which otherwise all might have shared.

From their point of view, perhaps, this discontent was not unreasonable; but as I looked upon the works around me, I marvelled how it had been possible for the English, unprotected as they must have originally been, to erect these great towers for their own shelter, and from which to batter the town with their cannon and great stone balls, when the French in great numbers and protected by strong walls, ought to have been able to sally forth continually and so to harass them that the construction of such buildings should have been impossible.

The great Dunois had shown considerable acumen. He had himself destroyed all the suburbs of the town which lay without the walls, so that the English might find no shelter there, and when they had effected a lodgment on the south side of the river, he had destroyed the greater part of the bridge, thus making it impossible for the enemy to cross and take possession of the town. But he had not stopped the erection of those threatening towers circling round the city to the north, nor the construction of those still stronger blockading fortresses on the south side, Les Tourelles guarding the fragment of the broken bridge, and Les Augustins not far away.

When I spoke to one grizzled old soldier about it, he shrugged his shoulders and made reply:

“What would you? Those English are helped of the devil himself. We have tried to stand against them, but it is all to no purpose. Some demon of fighting enters into them, and they know that we shall fly—and fly we do. At last there were none who would face them. Our generals sought in vain to lead them. You should have heard La Hire swearing at them. O-he, O-he, he is a master of the art!

Some of us would have followed him; but the rest—one might as well have asked a flock of sheep to go against the wolf, telling them they were fifty to one! Not they!

It was witchcraft, or something like it. They sat still on these ramparts and watched the English working like moles or like ants, and never lifted a finger. Pouf! When men get to that they are not fit to fight They had better go home and ply the distaff with the women."

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A MISSION FROM GOD

“And let a woman come and lead their comrades to battle!” I said, laughing. “Have you seen the wonderful Maid of whom all the world is talking?”

“No; at least, I only caught a gleam of light upon her white armour last night; but as I said to the boys in the guardroom, I care not whether she be woman, witch, or angel; if she will bring back heart and courage, and make men again of all these chicken-hearted poltroons, I will follow her to the death wherever she may lead. I am sick with shame for the arms of France!”

“Bravely spoken, my friend!” I cried, giving him my hand; “and if that be the spirit of the army, I doubt not but that a few days will see such a turn in the tide of warfare as shall make the whole world stand aghast!”

“Then you believe in her?” quoth the old soldier, looking me shrewdly up and down.

“With my whole heart!” I answered, as I turned and took my way back to my quarters.

That same day the Maid held a council of war, at which all the officers of any importance were permitted to attend; and here it was that she received the first real check since she had received the King’s commission and royal command.

“Let us attack the foe at once, and without delay, messires!” she said, sitting at the head of the council table, fully armed, save for her headpiece, and speaking in her clear, sweet, full tones, wherein power and confidence were blended; “the Lord of Hosts is on our side. Let us go forth in His strength, and the victory will be ours.”

But they listened to her in silent consternation and amaze. Here was this inexperienced girl, blind with enthusiasm, drunk with success, her head completely turned by her reception last night, actually advising an assault

upon the enemy before the arrival of the army of relief, which had been forced to return to Blois to cross the river, and which could not arrive for a few more days. What madness would she next propose? Well, at least La Hire and Dunois were there to curb her folly and impetuosity. A chit of a girl like that to sit and tell them all to go forth to certain death at her command! As though they would not want all their strength to aid the relieving army to enter when it should appear! As though they were going to weaken themselves beforehand by any mad scheme of hers!

Thus the storm arose. Even La Hire, Dunois, and the Treasurer himself, were 75

against her. As for the lesser officers, when they began to speak, they scarce knew how to contain themselves, and restrain their anger and scorn from showing itself too markedly towards one who held the King's mandate of command.

And of late the Maid had always been listened to with such honour and respect! How would she bear this contradiction and veiled contempt, she who had come to assume the command of the city and its armies at the King's desire?

She sat very still and quiet at the table, as the storm hummed about her.

Her clear gaze travelled from face to face as one or another of the officers rose and spoke. Sometimes a slight flush of red dyed her cheek for a moment; but never once did anger cloud her brow, or impatience or contempt mar the wonderful serenity of her beautiful eyes. Only once did she speak during the whole of the debate, after her opening words had been delivered, and that was after a very fiery oration on the part of a youthful officer, whose words contained more veiled scorn of her and her mission than any other had dared to show.

Instead of looking at him either in anger or in reproach, the Maid's own wonderful smile shone suddenly upon him as he concluded. Then she spoke:

“Captain de Gamache, you think yourself my foe now; but that will soon be changed, and I thank you beforehand for the brave, true service which you shall presently render me. But meantime, beware of rashness; for victory shall not come to the city without the Maid.”

He gazed at her—we all gazed at her—in amaze, not knowing what her words portended. But she gave no explanation. She only rose to her feet and said:

“Then, gentlemen, since the attack is not to be yet—not till the arrival of the relieving force, let me make the tour of the battlements, and examine the defences of the city. I would that you had faith to let me lead you forth today; but the time will come when I shall not have to plead with you—you will follow gladly in my wake. For the rest, it would perchance be a sorrow to my brave men, who have marched so far with me, not to partake in the victory which the Lord is about to send us; wherefore I will the more readily consent to delay, though, let me tell you, you are in the wrong to withstand the wishes of the Commander of the King’s armies, and the messenger of the King of Kings.”

I verily believe that she shamed them by her gentle friendliness more than she would have done by any outburst of wrath. Had she urged them now, I am not sure but what they would have given her her way; but she did not. She put her 76

white velvet cap, with its nodding plumes, upon her head, and taking with her the chiefest of the generals and her own immediate retinue, she made the tour of the walls and defences of the city, showing such a marvellous insight into the tactics of war that she astonished all by her remarks and by her injunctions.

Suddenly, as we were walking onwards, she paused and lifted her face with a wonderful rapt expression upon it. Then she turned to Dunois, and said with quiet authority:

“Mon General, I must ask of you to take a small body of picked men, and ride forth towards Blois, and see what bechances there. I trow there is trouble among the men. Traitors are at work to daunt their hearts. Go and say that the Maid bids them fear nothing, and that they shall enter Orleans in safety. The English shall not be suffered to touch them. Go at once!”

“In broad daylight, lady, and before the very eyes of the foe?”

“Yes, yes,” she answered instantly; “I will stand here and watch you. No hurt shall be done to you or to your company.”

So Dunois went at her command, and we saw him and his little band ride fearlessly through the English lines; and scarce could we believe our eyes when we noted that no weapon was raised against them; not even an arrow was shot off as they passed.

“She speaks the words of God. She is His messenger!” whispered the men who stood by; and her fame flew from mouth to mouth, till a strange awe fell upon all.

She was never idle during those days of waiting. She asked news of the letter she had sent to the English, and heard it had been delivered duly, though the herald had not returned. She gave commission to La Hire to demand his instant release, and this was accomplished speedily; for the bold captain, of his own initiative, vowed he would behead every prisoner they had in the city if the man were not given up at the command of the Maid. I am very sure no such act of summary vengeance would have been permitted, but the man was instantly released and came and told us how that the letter had been read with shouts of insulting laughter, and many derisive answers suggested; none of which, however, had been dispatched, as Talbot, the chief in command of the English armies, had finally decreed that it became not his dignity to hold any parley with a witch.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

And yet she could scarce believe that they should none of them understand how that she was indeed come from God, and that they must be lamentably overthrown if they would not hear her words. On the third day of her stay in the city she caused her great white banner to be carried forth before her, and riding a white horse, clad in her silver armour, and clasping her banneret in her hand she rode slowly out upon the broken fragment of the bridge opposite to the tower of Les Tourelles, and begged a parley from the English general in command.

It was not Lord Talbot who came forth and stood upon his own end of the bridge, gazing haughtily across the space which divided them; but it was a notable soldier, whom the French called Classidas, though I have been told that his real name was Sir William Glassdale. To him the Maid addressed herself in her clear mellow voice, which could be heard across the flowing river:

"Retournez de la part Dieu a l'Angleterre!" was the burden of her charge, imploring him to have mercy upon himself and his soldiers, as else many hundreds of them, and himself also, must perish miserably, and perchance even without the offices of the Church.

But she was answered by roars of mocking laughter from the soldiers of the fort, and worse still, by gross insults from Classidas himself, hurled across at her from a biting tongue, which carried like the note of a trumpet.

Silently she stood and gazed at him; mournfully she turned and rode back to the town.

"May God have mercy upon their souls!" she prayed; and for the rest of the day she was sorrowful and sad.

"If it could have been done without bloodshed!" she murmured again and yet again.

Ah, and then the day when the news came that the relieving army was in sight! Was she sad or pensive then? No! She sprang to her feet; she set down the little Charlotte, who was playing in her arms; she seized her weapons, her page flew to bring her full armour. Her horse was already in waiting; she swung upon his back. She waved her hand and called to us to rally about her.

"The English are preparing to fight!" she cried (how did she know? none had told her), "but follow me, and they will strike no blow."

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A MISSION FROM GOD

Already La Hire was at her side, seeking to dissuade her from leaving the shelter of the town. She smiled at him, and rode through the gate, her white banner floating in the wind.

"See yonder; that is the point of danger. We will station ourselves there, and watch our brave army march past. They shall not be hurt nor dismayed. All shall be well!"

So we rode, wondering and amazed, behind and around her, and at the appointed spot, in the very midst of the English lines, we halted, and made a great avenue for the army from Blois to pass through. All gazed in wonder at the Maid.

All saluted deeply. The English in their towers gazed in amaze, but fired no shot.

We all passed into the city in safety.

Great God, but how would it be with our Maid when the real battle and bloodshed should begin?

"It was well indeed that you sent me forth on that mission, my Chieftainess,"

spoke Dunois, as we sat at the long table in the Treasurer's house, refreshing ourselves after the fatigues of the march to and from the city, and the anxiety of awaiting an attack, which had not come. He bowed towards the Maid in speaking, calling her by a playful title in vogue amongst the officers and Generals who were her friends. "Though what prompted you to that act of sagacity is more than I know. I had no misgivings that there would be trouble with the army."

“My voices warned me,” answered the Maid gently. “It was not much; yet a little leaven often leavens the whole lump. They needed just the leader’s eye and voice to recall them to their duty.”

“Truly that is just how the matter stood,” spoke Sir Guy in low tones to us twain, Bertram and I, who sat on either side of him at the other end of the board.

He had been one to depart and return with Dunois, and we looked eagerly to him for explanation.

“There are ever timid spirits in all ranks, and traitors or faint-hearted friends are never far away in such times as these. The army which would have followed the Maid to the death with joy, felt depression and disappointment at being parted from her. Had they been able to ford the river and march straight into the city, there would have been no trouble, no tremors or doubts; but the turning back was a discouragement, and alas! the French have had too much of this of late. There were whisperers at work seeking to undermine faith in the Maid and her mission.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

As she says, no great hurt was done; it was but the work of a few—and some of these priests, who should better have understood the counsels of God—but a little leaven will work mightily in the lump, as she herself did justly remark; and ere we reached Blois, we had heard rumours that the army was talking of disbanding itself and dispersing hither and thither. The truth was not so bad as that; but there was wavering and doubt in the ranks.

"Our appearance with the message from the Maid worked like a charm.

The soldiers, when they knew that she had been told of their hesitation, were instantly horribly ashamed. They clamoured to be led back to her, to show the mettle of which they were made. I trow they will not waver again, now that she hath them beneath her eye."

"It is marvellous how she doth hold them by the power of her glance, by her gentleness and devotion. And, look you, what hath she done to the English? It was rumoured through the city that so soon as the relief army approached the English lines, there would be an attack in force, and our comrades would be driven back at the sword's point, and have to fight every inch of the way. Yet what has been the truth? The Maid led us to the spot which commanded the road—well in the heart of the English lines. Their fortresses were humming like hives of bees disturbed. The English knew what was being done, and watched it all; yet not a gun was fired, not an archer launched his shaft, not a man moved out to oppose the entrance of the relief force nor even the convoy of provisions for the garrison.

They watched it all as men in a dream, not a dog moved his tongue against us."

"She told us it would be so," spoke I, leaning towards Sir Guy, "there will be fighting anon; but it was not to be then. Surely their arms were holden by a power they wot not of. If she herself had not gone forth to guard the way—standing like the flaming cherubim with the sword which turned every way

—I misdoubt me but that a heavy action must have been fought, ere the army was suffered to enter the gates."

There was much talk all down the table of these matters; but the Maid took little part in this. Her eyes were heavy, and she looked weary and pale. I doubt not she had spent the night previous in vigil and prayer, as was so often her wont.

When we rose from our repast, she retired into a small inner room reserved for her use, and the little Charlotte went with her. A curtain, partly drawn, shut off this room from the outer one in which we knights and some of her pages and gentlemen sat talking; and I was just able to see from where I sat that the Maid had laid herself down upon a couch, the little one nestled beside her, and I felt sure by her stillness and immobility that she was soon soundly asleep, taking the rest she sorely 80

needed after the exertions and excitements of the early hours of the day.

Our conversation languished somewhat, for the warmth of the May afternoon made us all drowsy. We, like the Maid herself, had laid aside our coats of mail, and were enjoying a spell of rest and leisure; and there was silence in both the rooms, when suddenly we—if indeed we slept—were awakened by the voice of the Maid speaking in the tones of one who dreams.

"I must up and against the English!" she cried, and at the first word I started broad awake and was on my feet at the door of communication, looking towards her.

She still lay upon the couch, but her eyes were wide open and fixed; her lips moved.

"I hear! I hear!" she went on, yet still as one who dreams, "I am ready—I will obey. Only tell me what I must do. Is it against the towers I must go, to assail them? Or is it that Fastolffe comes against us with yet another host?"

Little Charlotte here pulled the Maid by the hand, crying out:

“What are you saying? To whom do you speak? There is nobody here but you and me!”

The Maid sprang to her feet, wide awake now in an instant. She bent for one moment over the wondering child, and kissed her tenderly, as though to soothe the alarm in the baby eyes.

“Run to your mother, ma mie, for I must off and away on the instant,” then wheeling round with her air of martial command, she called to me and said, “To arms at once! I must to the front! French blood is flowing. They are seeking to act without me. O my poor soldiers, they are falling and dying! To horse! to horse! I come to save them!”

Was she dreaming? What did it mean? The town seemed as quiet as the still summer afternoon! Not a sound of tumult broke the silence of the streets. Yet the Maid was having us arm her with lightning speed, and Bertrand had rushed off at the first word for her horse and ours.

“I know not what they are doing,” spoke the Maid, “but my voices tell me to fly to their succour! Ah! why could they not have told me before! Have I not ever 81

been ready and longing to lead them against the foe?”

She was ready now. We were all ready, and the echoes of the quiet house awoke beneath our feet as we clattered down the staircase to the courtyard below, where already the horses were standing pawing the ground with impatience, seeming to scent the battle from afar. The Maid swung herself lightly to the saddle with scarce a touch from me.

“My banner! My banner!” she suddenly cried; and looking upwards we saw a pretty sight. The little Charlotte, her mother beside her, was hanging out of the window, the light staff of the Maid’s white banneret clasped in her chubby hands; and she was leaning out of the window, holding it towards the white mailed figure, of whom (in armour) she always spoke, in hushed tone, as mon ange. The Maid looked upwards, kissed her gauntletted hand to

the little one, seized the staff of her banner, and then, calling upon her followers in clear tones of command, dashed out through the gateway into the street beyond, and without an instant's hesitation turned towards that gate of the city nearest to the English bastille named St. Loup. And though we all spurred after her, so that the sparks flew from under our horses' feet, and the Chevalier d'Aulon brought up the rear bearing the great white standard, which was to lead the armies into battle, we none of us knew wherefore we had come forth nor whither we were going; and the city being yet still and quiet, the citizens rushed to doors and windows to watch us pass by, and shouted questions to us which we were not able to answer.

Now, the house of the Treasurer is hard by the Renart Gate, and we were making for the Burgundy Gate; so you who know Orleans will understand that we had the whole distance of the city to traverse ere we cleared the walls. And sure enough, as we approached the fortifications upon the eastern side, a change came over the spirit of the scene; signs of excitement and fear and wonder began to show themselves; the walls were alive with men at arms, gazing fixedly out eastward, shouting, gesticulating, wild with a tumult of emotion. Soldiers buckling on their arms, citizens with pale, yet resolute, faces, and swords or axes in their hands, were hurrying forth, and at sight of the Maid on her chestnut charger (for the Crusader was ever her favourite horse, and she had declared that he must carry her into her first battle whenever that should be) they shouted aloud with joy, and vowed themselves her servants and followers, wherever she should lead them.

A young blacksmith, armed with a great club, was hanging upon my stir-rup, and bounding along beside my horse with a swiftness and strength which excited my admiration. From him I heard first of the thing which had taken place.

82

A MISSION FROM GOD

"It was De Gamache and some of the other lesser officers who designed it," he cried. "They declared that the power of the English was already broken; that they would not leave their walls or show fight today; that already they had grown faint hearted, and were ready to fly before the French.

"My Captain, I tell you the truth, these men are jealous of the Angelic Maid whom Heaven has sent us. They say that she will take from them all the honour and glory; that they will fight and risk their lives, but that she alone will have the praise. So they were full of bitterness and anger; and some, methinks, may have thought to shame her by showing that they could act without her aid, and do the work she has come to do, whilst she takes her rest and holds her councils. So, gathering a band of soldiers together, these officers have sallied forth to try and storm and take the fortress of St. Loup, which lies some two thousand English yards from the walls along the river banks. But the soldiers on the walls are shouting out that the English have swarmed forth like angry bees, and are beating back our soldiers and slaying them by the score."

"They should have known better than to go forth without the knowledge and command of the Maid," I said sternly, and the young man at my side nodded vehemently, his face alight.

"That is what we said—we others—we citizens, who have seen how powerless the soldiers are against the English. Have they not fought again and again, and what has come of it but loss and defeat? And now that the good God has sent a Deliverer, it is like flying in His face to seek and do without her. I said as much again and again. I knew no good would come of it. But when we saw the Maid herself flying to the rescue, then did I vow that I, too, would fight under her banner. For now I know that God will give us the victory!"

We were at the Burgundy Gate by this time and, dashing through, we saw a terrible sight. The whole open plain between the walls of the town and the

fortress of St. Loup was covered with soldiers, strewn with dying and dead. A horrible sort of fight was going on, horrible to us, because the French were in full retreat before our foe, going down like sheep before the butcher's knife, rushing panic stricken hither and thither as men demented, whilst the English soldiers, as though ashamed of their recent inaction and paralysis, were fiercely pursuing, shouting "Kill! kill! kill!" as they went about their work of slaughter, driving back their enemies, and striking at them remorselessly.

Here and there a brave officer, with his band of chosen followers, would be presenting a bold face to the foe, making a stand and seeking to rally the flying 83

ranks. I was certain that I saw De Gamache himself, hewing his way like a very Paladin through the ranks of the English, and dealing death and destruction wherever he went. But the valour of a few had no power to turn the fortunes of the field; and the rout had already begun, when the Maid and her attendants, closely followed by an enthusiastic band of soldiers and citizens, dashed forth from the Burgundy Gate, and mingled with the flying French hastening towards the city for safety.

"Courage, my children, courage!" cried the Maid, waving her white pennon. "Be not dismayed. The Lord has heard your cries. He has sent me to your aid.

Take courage! Fear nothing, for the victory shall be ours!"

She did not even pause to note the effect of her words upon them, but sped onwards, fearless of danger, right into the very heart of the battle. We followed and closed up round her; but that shining white figure could not be hidden. The English saw it bearing down upon them, and instantly there was wavering in their ranks. Before our swords had had time to strike at them, something touched them as with an icy hand.

"The Maid! the Maid! The White Witch!" they cried, and they paused in their pursuit to gaze upon that dazzling figure, and methinks their hearts

melted like wax within them.

From behind now arose a mighty tumult, and shouts and cries as of triumph thundered from the city walls. Dunois and La Hire, more tardily advised of what was happening, but prompt and decisive in action, were galloping out of the Gate at the head of the picked soldiers under their command. Rank behind rank we could see them flashing through the shadow into the sunshine, and dashing forward in compact order, their gaze fixed full upon the Maid in the centre of the plain, who stood with uplifted sword and fluttering pennon, a veritable angel of the battle.

But we saw other sights, too; for Lord Talbot was not idle on his side, but sent forth from other of the bastilles bodies of men to the aid of the defenders of St.

Loup.

The whole plain was filled with surging masses of soldiers, rushing one upon the other in the fury of the fray.

How would the Maid bear it? She whose tender heart ached at the thought of human suffering, and whose soul was filled with yearning sorrow for men struck 84

down in their sins. I pressed up towards her and saw her pitiful eyes fixed upon a convoy of wounded men, whom we had sent to rescue from their peril, lying as they did in the very heart of the plain. The eyes which had been flashing fire a moment before, were suffused with tears, as the melancholy procession passed her by.

She turned to her page and said, “Ride quickly into the city, and bid the priests come forth to hear the confessions and give absolution to the dying. Lose not a moment! Tell them that souls are every moment being hurried to their last account. Bid them make haste and come, and let them give equal care to friend and foe; for in death all men are equal in the sight of God, and

I would not that any English soldier or prisoner should fall without the consolations of religion."

Then, having thus done all that she could for the wounded and the dying, the Maid was once again the resolute soldier. Her keen eyes swept the plain; she saw with lightning speed where the need was the greatest, where the peril to the French cause was direst, and sweeping into the midst of the press, her sword and her banner flashing in the sunshine, she ever brought succour and victory in her wake.

No foe could stand before her. Not that she struck blows with her own hand.

There seemed no need for that, and when at the close of the day I relieved her of her arms, there was no spot of blood upon her shining blade, though her coat of silver mail had received stains from the fray. She was like the Angel of Victory, flashing through the ranks of the combatants. Wherever she appeared, the flying French turned back to face the foe, and the pursuing English wavered, paused, and finally broke rank and fled backwards to the shelter of their walls and forts.

Our men fought gallantly—let me not deny them their due—soldiers and citizens alike, who had come forth with and after the Maid, all were inspired by confidence and courage. But it was her presence in the ranks which gave assurance of victory. Wherever French soldiers wavered it was when she was far away and her back towards them. Yet so soon as she turned in their direction—and some power seemed to whisper to her whenever her soldiers were dismayed—and galloped to their assistance, all was well again; and ere an hour had passed the English were driven back within their towers, and the victory was ours.

Dunois and La Hire rode up to the Maid and saluted. From the city in our rear we could already hear the pealing of the joy bells, the triumphant acclamation of the populace.

"Let us lead you back thither to receive the plaudits you have so well de-85

served," spoke Dunois, who was man enough to give all the credit of the victory to the Maid. "Right valiantly have you accomplished your task. Now let us take you to receive the gratitude of the town."

"Accomplished!" repeated the Maid with a glance of surprise. "Why, my friends, the task is scarcely yet begun!"

They gazed at her in amazement; but she calmly pointed towards the frowning walls and battlements of St. Loup.

"We must take yonder tower," she said quietly, "that is what our brave, but rash young officers set themselves to do. They shall not be disappointed. It shall be ours ere night fall upon us. Call to me the bold De Gamache; I would have speech with him and his comrades."

The greater Generals looked at her and at one another, speaking no word.

The walls and battlements of St. Loup were strong and well defended. The tower could spout fire and smoke like a living monster. Already the troops had marched far and fought hotly. Surely if assault were to be made it should wait for another day. Thus they communed together a stone's throw from the Maid; but she only looked upon them with her deep inward smile, and softly I heard her speak the words:

"No, it must be done today."

De Gamache rode up, and some half dozen other officers with him. His face was stained with blood and blackened by smoke. He had a scarf bound about his left arm; but his bearing was bold and resolute, and though his cheek flushed at the clear, direct gaze of the Maid's eyes, he neither faltered nor trembled as he stood before her.

"You did desire a good thing, my Captain," she said, "and had you told me of your brave wish, I would have put myself at your head and led you to victory forthwith. Yet this victory has not been forfeited, only delayed by your eager rashness. Say, if I lead you myself, this very hour, against yon frowning tower, will you follow me like brave soldiers of the Cross, and not turn back till my Lord has given us the victory? For He will deliver yon

place into our hands, albeit not without bloodshed, not without stress or strife. Many must be slain ere we can call it ours, but will you follow and take it?"

The shout which arose from a thousand throats rang to the welkin, and 86

methinks must have smote with dread import upon the English ears. The Maid's voice seemed to float through the air, and penetrate to the extreme limits of the crowd, or else her words were taken up and repeated by a score of eager tongues, and so ran through the mighty muster with thrilling import. The eyes were dazzled by the flashing blades as men swung them above their heads.

"Lead us, O Maid, lead us! We follow to death or victory! We fear nothing so that you are our leader and our guide!"

There was no withstanding a spirit like that! La Hire's voice was one of the foremost in the cry; his great blade the first to leap from its scabbard. Sage counsels of war, prompted by experience, had to give way before a power different from anything which the veterans had known before. With a dash, the elan of which was a marvellous sight to see, the soldiers poured themselves like a living stream against the walls of St. Loup. The English behind the fortifications rained upon them missiles of every description. The air was darkened by a cloud of arrows.

The cannon from the walls belched forth smoke and flame, and great stone and iron balls came hurtling down into our midst, dealing death and destruction. The English soldiers with their characteristic daring sallied forth sword in hand to beat us back and yet we pressed on and ever on; driven backwards here and there by stress of fighting; but never giving great way, and always rallied by the sight of that gleaming white armour, and by the clear, sweet voice ringing out through all the tumult of arms.

"Courage, my children, courage. The fight is fierce; but my Lord gives you the victory. A little more courage, a little more patience, and the day is ours!"

She stood unscathed amid the hail of stones and arrows. Her clear glance never quailed; her sweet voice never faltered; she had thought for everyone but herself. Again and again with her own hands she snatched some follower from a danger unseen by him, but which a moment later would have been his death. She herself stood unmoved in the awful tumult. She even smiled when Dunois and La Hire would have drawn her from the hottest of the fighting.

“No, no, my friends, my place is here. Have no fear. I shall not suffer. I have guardians watching over me that you wot not of.”

And so she stood unmoved at the foot of the tower, till the English, overcome with amaze, gave up the defence, and fled from a place they believed must surely be bewitched.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

And as the last of the sunlight faded from the sky, the fortress of St. Loup was ours. The Maid had fought her first battle, and had triumphed.

The people of Orleans, and we her knights and followers, were well-nigh wild with joy. I do not think I had ever doubted how she would bear herself in battle; and yet my heart had sometimes trembled at the thought of it. For, after all, speaking humanly, she was but a girl, a gentle maid, loving and tender-hearted, to whom the sight of suffering was always a sorrow and a pain. And to picture a young girl, who had perhaps never seen blows struck in anger in her life—save perchance in some village brawl—suddenly set in the midst of a battle, arms clashing, blood flowing, all the hideous din of warfare around her, exposed to all its fearful risks and perils—was it strange we should ask ourselves how she would bear it? Was it wonderful that her confidence and calmness and steadfast courage under the trial should convince us, as never perhaps we had been convinced before, of the nearness of those supernatural beings who guarded her so closely, who warned her of danger, who inspired her with courage, and yet never robbed her for one moment of the grace and beauty and crown of her pure womanhood?

And so, whilst we were well-nigh mad with joy and triumph, whilst joy bells pealed from the city, and the soldiers and citizens were ready to do her homage as a veritable saint from heaven, she was just her own quiet, thoughtful, retiring self. She put aside the plaudits of the Generals; she hushed the excited shouting of the soldiers. She exercised her authority to check and stop the carnage, to insist that quarter should be given to all who asked it, to see that the wounded upon both sides were carried into the city to receive attention and care, and in particular that the prisoners—amongst whom were several priests—should receive humane treatment, and escape any sort of insult or reprisal.

These matters occupied her time and thought to the exclusion of any personal pride or triumph. It was with difficulty that the Generals could

persuade her to ride at their head into the city, to receive the applause and joyful gratitude of the people; and as soon as she could without discourtesy extricate herself from the crowd pressing round to kiss her hands or her feet, or even the horse upon which she rode, she slipped away to give orders that certain badly wounded English prisoners were to be carried to the Treasurer's house, and laid in the spacious guest chamber, which, having been prepared for her own reception, had been permitted to no one else. Here she begged of Madame Boucher permission to lodge them, that she might tend their hurts herself, and assure herself that all was well with them.

No one could deny the Maid those things she asked, knowing well that oth-

ers in her place would have issued commands without stooping to petition. But with the Maid it was never so. Her gentle courtesy never deserted her. No association with men, no military dignity of command, which she could so well assume, ever tarnished the lustre of her sweet humility. A gentle maiden, full of tenderness and compassion, she showed herself now. Instead of resting after the sore strife of the battle, which had exhausted even strong men, nothing would serve her but that she must herself dress the wounds of these English prisoners; and so deft was her touch, and so soft and tender her methods with them, that not a groan passed the lips of any of them; they only watched her with wondering eyes of gratitude; and when she had left the room they looked at each other and asked:

"Who is it? Is it boy, or angel, or what? The voice is as the voice of a woman, and the touch is as soft; but the dress is the dress of a man. Who can it be?"

I understood them, for I knew something of the English tongue, and I saw that they were in great amazement; for all who had seen the Maid bore her image stamped upon their hearts; and yet it was impossible for these prisoners of war to believe that the triumphant, angelic Commander of the Forces could stoop to tend the hurts of wounded prisoners with her own hands.

“Gentlemen,” I said, “that is the Angelic Maid herself—she who has been sent of Heaven for the deliverance of France. I trow that you soldiers and knights of England have called her witch, and threatened to burn her if you can lay hands upon her. Perchance now that you have seen her thus face to face, your thoughts towards her will somewhat change.”

They gazed at me and at one another in amaze. They broke into questions, eager and full of curiosity. When I had answered them they were ready to tell me what was spoken of her in the English ranks; all averred that some strange power seemed to fall upon them with the advent of the Maid into the city—a power that withheld them from sallying forth to hinder her coming, or that of the relieving army.

“We had meant to fight her to the death,” spoke one English knight. “I was in counsel with the Generals when it was so proposed; and yet more resolved were we to keep out the army from Blois, which we heard must needs pass straight through our lines—an easy prey, we said, to our gunners, archers and swords-men. All was in readiness for the attack—and yet no word was ever given. No trumpet sounded, though the men were drawn up ready. We all stood to arms; but the sight of that dazzling white figure seemed to close the lips of our commanders, to numb the limbs of our soldiers. I can say no more. When the chance was gone—

the hour passed—we gazed into each other's face as men awaking from a dream.

We cursed ourselves. We cursed the witch who had bound us by her spells. We vowed to redeem and revenge ourselves another day. And when we saw the French issuing forward to the attack scarce two hours after the entry of the relieving army, and there was no white figure with them, then indeed did we tell ourselves that our time was come; and we thought to win a speedy victory over the men who had so often fled before us. Yet you know how the day did end. The Maid came—

victory rode beside her! Nought we could do availed when she appeared. I had thought to be left to die upon the battlefield, but behold I am here, and she has dressed my wounds with her own hands! It is wonderful! Past belief! Tell me who and what is she? A creature of earth or of heaven?"

I had already told him all I knew; but they were never tired of hearing the story of the Maid; and as I, at her request, watched beside them during the night, ministering to their wants, and doing what I was able to relieve their pain, I found that nothing so helped them to forget the smart of their wounds as the narration of all the wonderful words and deeds of this Heavenly Deliverer of France.

They were frank enough on their side also, and told me much of the disposition of their forces, and how that they were expecting a strong army to join them quickly, headed by Sir John Fastolffe, a notable knight, whose name we well knew, and had trembled before ere this. They admitted that their ranks were somewhat thinned by disease and death, and that they had scarce sufficient force both to maintain all the bastilles erected on the north side of the river and also to hold the great forts of Les Tourelles and Les Augustins on the south; but that when the reinforcements should arrive all would be well, and but for the marvellous power of the Maid, they would

have felt no doubt whatever as to the speedy reduction of the city either by assault or blockade.

With the first golden shafts of sunlight came the Maid once more, little Charlotte beside her, both bearing in their hands such cooling drinks and light suste-nance as the condition of the wounded men required. The Maid wore the white, silver embroidered tunic and silken hose which Queen Yolande had provided for her indoor dress; she carried no arms, and her clustering curls framed her lovely face like a nimbus. All eyes were fixed upon her as upon a vision, and as she bent over each wounded man in turn, asking him of his welfare and holding a cup to his lips, I could see the amazement deepening in their eyes; and I am sure that they were well-nigh ready to worship the ground upon which she trod, so deep was the impression made upon them by her beauty and her gentle treatment.

When she left the room I followed her at her sign, and asked: 90

A MISSION FROM GOD

"Then you go not forth to battle today, General?"

"Nay," she replied, "for today the Church keeps the blessed Feast of the Ascension; which should be to all a day of peace and thanksgiving and holy joy. I am going forthwith to hear Mass and receive the Holy Sacrament; and I would have my faithful knights about me. Let us forget warfare and strife for this day."

Her own face was transfigured as she spoke. The light shone upon it all the time that she knelt before the high altar in the Cathedral, rapt in a mystery of thanksgiving and heavenly joy. O how real it all was to her—those things which were to us articles of faith, grounds of hope, yet matters which seemed too far above us to arouse that personal rapture which was shining from the eyes and irradiating the whole face of the Maid.

It was a beautiful beginning to the day; and all the early hours were spent by the Maid in meditation and prayer within the walls of the Cathedral, where the people flocked, as perhaps they had never done before, to give thanks for the mercies received with the advent of the Maid, and to gaze upon her, as

she knelt in a trance of rapture and devotion in her appointed place not far from the altar.

We, her knights, went to and fro, some of us always near to her, that the crowd might not too curiously press upon her when she went forth, or disturb her devotions by too close an approach.

I noted that none of the Generals appeared or took part in the acts of devotion that day. And as I issued forth into the sunny street at the close of the High Mass, Bertrand met me with a look of trouble and anger on his face.

"They are all sitting in council of war together," he said, "and they have not even told her of it, nor suffered her to join them! How can they treat her so —even Dunois and La Hire—when they have seen again and yet again how futile are all plans made by their skill without the sanction of her voice? It makes my gorge rise! Do they think her a mere beautiful image, to ride before them and carry a white banner to affright the foe? It is a shame, a shame, that they should treat her so, after all that they have seen and heard!"

I was as wroth as Bertrand, and as full of surprise. Even now, looking back after all these years, the blindness of these men of war astonishes and exasper-ates me. They had seen with their own eyes what the Maid could accomplish; again and again she had proved herself the abler in counsel as in fight; and yet they now deliberately desired to set her aside from their councils, and only inform her of 91

their decisions when made, and permit her to take a share in the fighting they had planned.

Bertrand was furiously angry. He led me up into a lofty turret which commanded a bird's-eye view of the whole city and its environs, and he pointed out that which the Maid had declared she would straightway do, so soon as the Feast of the Ascension was over, and how the Generals were about to follow a quite different course.

Orleans, as all men know, lies upon the right—the north—bank of the Loire, and the country to the north was then altogether in the power of the English; wherefore they had built their great bastilles around the city upon that side without molestation, and were able to receive supplies from their countrymen without let or hindrance.

But these bastilles were not the chiefest danger to the city, or rather I should say, it was not these which were the chiefest cause of peril, since no help could reach the garrison from that side. They looked to the country to the south to help them, and it was to stop supplies from reaching them by water or from the south that the English had long since crossed the river and had established themselves in certain forts along the south bank. Of these, St. Jean le Blanc was one; but by far the most important and dangerous to the city were the two great towers commanding the bridge, whose names I have given before. Let me explain how these great fortifications stood.

Les Augustins had once been a convent, and it stood on the south bank, very near to the end of the bridge, guarding it securely from attack, and commanding the waterway and the approach to the city. Les Tourelles was an even stronger tower, constructed upon the very bridge itself, and menacing the town in formidable fashion. Dunois had broken down the main portion of the bridge on the north side to prevent the advance into the city of the English from their tower; so it stood grimly isolated from either bank; for the permanent bridge at the south end had been destroyed to be replaced by a drawbridge which could rise or fall at will.

And it was these towers of Les Augustins and Les Tourelles which had reduced the city to such straits by hindering the entrance of food supplies. Moreover, from Les Tourelles great stone cannon balls had been hurled into the city in vast numbers, battering down walls and doing untold damage to buildings and their inhabitants.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

Now it was evident to all that these fortresses must be taken if the city were to be relieved and the siege raised. But the Maid, with her far-seeing eyes, had decreed that first the bastilles upon the north bank should be attacked and destroyed; and it was easy to follow her reasoning; "For," she said, "when the English are fiercely attacked there, they will, without doubt, yield up these lesser fortresses without a great struggle, concentrating themselves in force upon the left bank, where they think to do us most hurt. We shall then destroy their bastilles, so that they will have no place of shelter to fly back to; and then we shall fall upon them hip and thigh on the south side, and drive them before us as chaff before the wind. They must needs then disperse themselves altogether, having no more cover to hide themselves in; so will the enemies of the Lord be dispersed, and the siege of Orleans be raised."

This was the plan she had confided to her own immediate attendants and staff the previous evening, and which Bertrand repeated to me, gazing over the ramparts, and pointing out each fortress and bastion as it was named. But now the Generals in Council, without reference to the Maid, had decreed something altogether different. What they desired to do was not to make any real or vigorous attack upon any of the English forts, but to feign an assault upon the towers on the south bank, and whilst the attention of the foe was thus engaged, get great quan-tifies of stores—all lying in readiness at hand —into the city, enough to last for a long while, and then quietly sit down behind the strong walls, and tire out the English, forcing them thus to retreat of their own accord!

Think of it! After all that had been promised, all that had been performed!

To be content to shut ourselves in a well-provisioned town, and just weary out the patience of the foe! And, moreover, of a foe who expected daily reinforcements from the north, and who would be quite capable of exercising as much patience, and perhaps more daring than ourselves.

Even now my blood boils at the thought, and I find it hard to conceive how such men as Dunois and La Hire let themselves be led from their allegiance and confidence in the Maid to listen to such counsel as this from her detractors, and those many lesser commanders who were sorely jealous of her success and influence. But so it was, not once nor twice, but again and again; though in action they were staunch to her, would follow her everywhere, rally round her standard, fly to her defence when danger threatened, and show themselves gallant soldiers and generous-hearted men, never denying her all her share of praise and honour.

But when sitting in the council room, surrounded by officers and men of experience in war disposed to scorn the counsels of an unlettered girl, and scoff at her pretensions to military rule, they were invariably led away and overborne, agree-93

ing to act without her sanction, or even contrary to her advice, notwithstanding their belief in her mission, and their trust in her power as a leader.

The shades of evening had fallen in the Treasurer's house before word was brought to the Maid of the decision of the Generals in Council. We were sitting around her after supper; and she had fallen into a very thoughtful mood. The Chevalier d'Aulon had been called away, and now returned with a troubled face.

He stood just within the doorway, as though half afraid to advance. The Maid lifted her eyes to his and smiled.

"Do not fear to tell me your news, my kind friend. I know that your faithful heart is sore at the dishonour done to me; but let us not judge harshly. It is hard for men full of courage and fleshly power to understand how the Lord works with such humble instruments. Perchance, in their place, we should not be greatly different.

"So they have refused my plan, and made one of their own. We are to attack the foe upon the south? Is that agreed? And even so not with all our heart

and strength?"

D'Aulon recoiled a step in amaze.

"Madame, that is indeed so—a feint upon the south bank has been decreed, whilst provisions are thrown into the city—"

"Yes, yes, I know. Well, so be it. We will attack on the south bank. It must have come sooner or later, and if we fight with a will, the Lord will be with us and uphold our cause. But, my friends, understand this, and let the men likewise understand it. There shall be no mockery of fighting. It shall be true and desperate warfare. Let the Generals decree what they will, the Maid will lead her soldiers to victory! Tomorrow Les Augustins shall be ours; upon the next day Les Tourelles shall fall—" she paused suddenly and turned towards Bertrand.

"What day will that be—the day after to-morrow?"

"The seventh day of May," he answered at once.

"Ah!" she said, "then it will be on that day—the day which shall see Orleans relieved—the power of the English broken."

She spoke dreamily, and only Madame Boucher, who sat in the shadows 94

with her child upon her lap, ventured to ask of her:

"What will be on that day, gentle Jeanne?"

"That I shall be wounded," she answered quietly.

"Did I not tell you long since," turning to Bertrand and me, "that I should not come unscathed through the assault; but that on a certain day I should receive a wound?"

I pulled out my tablets, upon which I often recorded the sayings of the Maid, and sure enough there it was written down as she said. We felt a great

burning revolt at the thought of any hurt befalling her, and somebody spoke vehemently, saying that the holy Saints would surely protect her from harm. But she lifted her hand with her gentle authority of gesture, and spoke:

"Nay, my kind friends, but thus it must needs be; nor would I have it otherwise. Listen, and I will tell you all. I often had my days and hours of fear because this great work was put upon one so weak and ignorant as I, and it was long before I clearly understood that I was but the instrument in a mighty Hand, and that power for all would be given me. Then my fear left and great joy came; perhaps even some pride and haughtiness of spirit in that I had been chosen for such a task.

"And then it was that my voices asked of me: 'Jeanne, hast thou no fear?'

"And I answered without pause, 'I fear nothing now.'

"Then St. Catherine herself suddenly appeared to me in a great white light and said: 'Child, thou art highly favoured of heaven; but the flesh is easily puffed up. And for this cause, and because it may be well that thou thyself and all men shall know that thou art but human flesh and blood, thou shalt not escape unscathed in warfare; but thou too shalt feel the sting of fiery dart, and know the scald of flowing blood.'

"I bowed my head and made answer I would bear whatever my Lord thought fit to lay upon me; and I asked if I might know when this thing would happen. It was not told me then; but later it was revealed to me; and I know that upon the seventh day of May I shall be wounded—" and she touched her right shoulder as she spoke, just below the neck.

"But what matter will that be, when the siege of Orleans shall be raised?"

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A MISSION FROM GOD

Her face was aglow; nothing could touch her joy, not the insults of the proud Generals, nor the knowledge of coming pain for herself. Her thought was all of the mission entrusted to her; and so, though thwarted and set aside, she showed no petty anger, dreamed not of any paltry vengeance such as others might have dealt the soldiers, by refusing to march with them on the morrow. Oh, no; hurt she might be—indeed we knew she was—her pain being for the dishonour done her Lord in this disrespect of His messenger; but no thought of reprisal entered her head. She rose from her seat, and lifted the little Charlotte in her strong young arms.

"Gentlemen, let us early to rest," she said, holding her head proudly, "for tomorrow a great work shall be done, and we must all have our share in it."

To tell the tale of how Les Augustins was taken is but to tell again the tale of St Loup.

I know not precisely what instructions the lesser officers received, nor what they told their men. But whether from preconcerted arrangement that the attack was only to be a feint, or whether from the dash and energy of the English, it appeared at first as though the tide of war was rolling back in its old track, and that the prowess of the English as destined to win the day.

For one thing the assault was commenced before the Maid had crossed the river and could put herself at the head of the men. A large body of troops had been transported to the south side in boats during the night, under cover of darkness; and this was all very well; but they should have waited hen daylight came for the Maid to march at their head, instead of which they sought to rush the fortress before ever she had appeared at all; and when we arrived at the river's bank, it was to see a furious battle raging round the base of Les Augustins, and ere we were half across the river, we saw only too plainly that the French were being badly beaten, were fleeing in all directions from the pursuing foe, and were making for the river bank once more as fast as their legs could carry them.

The Maid watched it all, with that strange, inscrutable look upon her face, and that battle light in her eyes which we were all learning to know. She was sitting upon her horse; for though a number of animals had been taken across in the night, no horse of hers had been so conducted, and we had led the creature with its rider into the great flat-bottomed boat; so that she was on a higher level than the rest of us, and could better see what was passing, though it was plain to all that our soldiers were getting badly beaten.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"O foolish children, silly sheep!" murmured the Maid as she watched, "and yet you are not to blame, but those who lead you. When will they understand?

When will they believe?"

We reached the shore, and the Maid, without waiting for any of us to mount or form a bodyguard round her, leaped her horse to the bank, and charged up it, her pennon flying, her eyes alight with the greatness of her purpose.

But even as she climbed the slippery bank, a great rush of flying soldiers met her, and by their sheer weight forced back horse and rider almost to the river's brink before they were aware who or what it was.

Then her silver trumpet voice rang out. She called upon them to reform, to follow her. She cried that her Lord would give them the victory, and almost before we who had accompanied her had formed into rank for the charge, the flying, panic-stricken men from the front, ashamed and filled with fresh ardour, had turned themselves about, closed up their scattered ranks, and were ready to follow her whithersoever she might lead them.

Yet it was to no speedy victory she urged them. No angel with a flaming sword came forth to fight and overcome as by a miracle. But it was enough for that white-clad figure to stand revealed in the thickest of the carnage to animate the men to heroic effort. As I say, it was the story of St. Loup over again; but if anything the fighting was more severe. What the Generals had meant for a mere feint, the Maid turned into a desperate battle. The English were reinforced many times; it seemed as though we had a hopeless task before us. But confidence and assurance of victory were in our hearts as we saw our Deliverer stand in the thick of the fight and heard her clarion voice ringing over the field. Ere the shades of night fell, not only was Les Augustins ours, but its stores of food and ammunition had been safely

transported into the city, and the place so destroyed and dismantled that never again could it be a source of peril to the town.

And now the Maid's eyes were fixed full upon the frowning bulk of Les Tourelles, rising grim and black against the darkening sky, with its little "tower of the Boulevard," on this side the drawbridge. Thither had the whole English force retired—all who were not lying dead or desperately wounded on the plain or round the gutted tower of Les Augustins—we saw their threatening faces looking down fiercely upon us, and heard the angry voices from the walls, heaping abuse and curses upon the "White Witch," who had wrought them this evil.

"Would that we could attack at once!" spoke the Maid. "Would that the sun

would stay his course! Truly I do believe that we should carry all before us!"

The leaders came up to praise and glorify her prowess. They heard her words, but answered how that the men must needs have a night's rest ere they tried this second great feat of arms. But, they added, there should be no going back into the city, no delay on the morrow in crossing the river.

It was a warm summer-like night. Provisions were abundant, shelter could be obtained beneath the walls of the captured citadel. They, with the bulk of the army, would remain on the south bank for the nonce, and the Maid should return to the city with the convoys of wounded, to spend a quiet night there, returning with the dawn of the morrow to renew the attack and take Les Tourelles.

Thus they spoke, and spoke suavely and courteously. But I did note a strange look in the eyes of the Maid; and I wondered why it was that Dunois, the speaker, grew red and stumbled over his words, whilst that La Hire, who had done a giant's work in the fighting that day, ground his teeth and looked both ashamed and disturbed.

The Maid stood a brief while as though in doubt. But then she made quiet reply:

“Then, gentlemen, it shall be as you will. I will return to the city for the night. But with the dawn of day I will be here, and Les Tourelles shall be ours. The siege of Orleans shall be raised!”

They bowed low to her; every one of them made obeisance. Yet was there something ironical in the very humility of some? I could not tell; yet my heart burned within me as I followed our mistress; and never had I known her so silent as she was upon our journey back, or as we sat at supper, the rest of us telling of the day’s doings, but the Maid speechless, save when she bent her head to answer some eager question of little Charlotte’s, or to smile at her childish prattle.

Suddenly the door was flung open, and Sir Guy strode in with a face like a thundercloud. Behind him came a messenger sent by the Generals to the Maid, and this was the news he brought:

There had been a council held after dark, and it was then unanimously agreed that all now had been done that was necessary. The city was provisioned, the power of the English had been greatly weakened and broken. The army would now be content with the triumphs already won, and would quietly await further 98

reinforcements before taking any fresh step.

The man who brought this message faltered as he delivered it. The Maid sat very still and quiet, her head lifted in a dignified but most expressive disdain.

“Monsieur,” she replied, when the envoy ceased speaking, “go back to those who sent you. Tell them that they have had their council and I have had mine. I leave the city at dawn as I have said. I return not to it till the siege has been raised.”

The man bowed and retired confusedly. The Maid lifted the little child in her arms, as was her wont, to carry her to bed. She turned to her chaplain as she did so:

“Come to me at dawn, my father, to hear my confession; and I pray you accompany me upon the morrow; for my blood will be shed. But do not weep or fear for me, my friends, nor spread any banquet for me ere I start forth upon the morrow; but keep all for my return in the evening, when I will come to you by the bridge.”

She was gone as she spoke, and we gazed at her and each other in amaze; for how could she come back by a bridge which had been destroyed, and how did she brook such slights as were heaped upon her without showing anger and hurt pride?

“And there is worse yet to come!” cried Sir Guy in a fury of rage, “for I lingered behind to hear and see. If you will believe it, there are numbers and numbers of the lesser officers who would desire that the Maid should now be told that her work is done, and that she can retire to her home in Domremy; that the King will come himself with another reinforcing army to raise the siege, so that they may get rid of her, and take the glory to themselves whenever the place shall be truly relieved. Could you believe such folly, such treachery?”

We could not; we could scarce believe our ears, and right glad was I to hear how that La Hire had had no part in this shameful council; and I hope that Dunois had not either, though I fear me he was less staunch.

La Hire had returned to the city to seek to infuse into the citizens some of the spirit of the Maid. He was always for bold attack, and would be ready on the morrow, we did not doubt, for whatever might betide.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

It was little after dawn when we rode forth, the Maid in her white armour at our head, carrying her small pennon, whilst D'Aulon bore the great white standard close behind. Her face was pale and rapt. None of us spoke to her, and Pasquerel, her good chaplain, rode behind telling his beads as he went.

We reached the Burgundy Gate; and behold it was fast shut. At the portal stood De Gaucourt, a notable warrior, with a grim look about his mouth. The Maid saluted him courteously, and quietly bid him open the gate. But he budged not an inch.

"Madam," he said, "I have my commands from the Generals of the army.

The gate is to remain shut. No one is to be suffered to pass forth today."

We understood in a moment. This was a ruse to trap the Maid within the city walls. Our hands were upon the hilts of our swords. At a word from her, they would have flashed forth, and De Gaucourt would have been a dead man had he sought to hinder us in the opening of the gate. But the Maid read our purpose in our eyes and in our gestures, and she stayed us by her lifted hand.

"Not so, my friends," she answered gravely, "but the Chevalier de Gaucourt will himself order the opening of the gate. I have to ride through it and at once. My Lord bids it!"

Her eyes flashed full and suddenly upon him. We saw him quiver from head to foot. With his own hands he unlocked the gate, and it seemed to swing of its own accord wide open before us. The Maid bent her head in gracious acknowledgment, swept through and was off to the river like a flash of white lightning.

The river lay golden in the glory of the morning. The boats which had transported us across last night bore us bravely over now. I know not how

the Generals felt when they saw the Maid, a dazzling vision of brightness, her great white standard close behind, her phalanx of knights and gentlemen in attendance, gallop up to the scene of action, from which they thought they had successfully banished her. I only know that from the throats of the soldiers there arose a deafening shout of welcome. They at least believed in her. They looked to her as to none else.

They would follow her unwaveringly, when no other commander could make them budge.

A yell that rent the very firmament went up at sight of her, and every man seized his arms and sprang to his post, as though inspired by the very genius of victory.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"Courage, my children, forward! The day shall be ours!" she cried, as she took her place at the head of the formidable charge against the walls which frowned and bristled with the pikes and arrows of the English. Her voice, like a silver clarion, rang clear through the din of the furious battle which followed:

"Bon coeur, bonne esperance, mes enfants, the hour of victory is at hand!

De la part de Dieu! De la part de Dieu!"

That was her favourite battle cry! It was God who should give the victory.

But it was no easy victory we were to win that day. The English fought with the energy of despair. They knew as well as we that when Les Tourelles fell the siege would be raised. True they had their bastilles upon the north side of the river to fall back upon, since the Maid's counsel of destruction had not been followed. But once dislodged from the south bank, and Orleans would lie open to the support of her friends in the south, and the position of the English army would be one of dire peril. For now the French were no more cowed by craven fear of the power of their enemies. They had found them capable of defeat and overthrow; the spell was broken. And it was the Maid who had done it!

Oh, how we fought around her that day! She was on foot now, for the banks of the moat were slippery, and the press around the walls was too great to admit easily of the tactics of horsemen. I never saw her strike at any foe. It was her pennon rather than her sword in which she trusted. Here was the rallying point for the bravest and most desperate of the assailants, ever in the thickest of the strife, ever pointing the way to victory.

It was the tower of the Boulevard against which we were directing our attack. If that fell, Les Tourelles itself must needs follow, isolated as it would then be in the midst of the river. We did not know it then, but we were

to learn later, that La Hire in the city with a great band of citizens and soldiers to help him, was already hard at work constructing a bridge which should carry him and his men across to Les Tourelles, to take the English in the rear, whilst their attention was concentrated upon our work on the other side.

No wonder that the clash and din was something deafening, that the boom of the great cannon ceased not; smoke and fire seemed to envelop the walls of the towers; the air was darkened by clouds of arrows; great stones came crashing into our midst. Men fell on every side; we had much ado to press on without tread-ing under foot the dead and dying; but the white pennon fluttered before us, and 101

foot by foot we crept up towards the base of the tower.

Victory! Victory! was the cry of our hearts. We were close to the walls now —

the Maid had seized a ladder, and with her own hands was setting it in position, when—O woe! woe!—a great cloth-yard shaft from an English bow, tipped with iron and winged with an eagle's plume, struck upon that white armour with such crashing force that a rent was made in its shining surface, and the Maid was borne to the ground.

Oh, the terrible fear of that moment! The yell of triumph and joy which arose from the walls of the fortress seemed to turn my blood into liquid fire.

The English had seen the fall of our champion. They shouted like men drunk with victory! They knew well enough that were she dead, they would drive back the French as sheep are driven by wolves.

I had been close beside the Maid for hours; for I never forgot what she had spoken about being wounded that day; yet when she fell I had been parted from her a brief space, by one of those battle waves too strong for resistance. But now I fought my way to her side with irresistible fury, though there was such a struggling press all about her that I had much ado to force my way

through it. But I was known as one of her especial personal attendants, and way was made for me somehow; yet it was not I who was the first to render her assistance.

When I arrived, De Gamache was holding her in his arms; someone had removed her headpiece, and though her face was as white as the snowy plumes, her eyes were open, and there was a faint brave smile upon her lips. De Gamache had his horse beside him, his arm slipped through the reins.

"My brave General," he said, as the Maid looked in his face, "let me lift you to my saddle and convey you to a place of safety. I have done you wrong before; but I pray you forgive me, and bear no malice; for I am yours till death. Never was woman so brave."

"I should be wrong indeed to bear malice against any, my good friend,"

spoke the Maid, in her gentle tones, "above all against one so courteous, so brave."

We lifted her upon the horse. We formed a bodyguard round her. We drew her out of the thick of the press, for once unresisting; and we laid her down in a little adjacent vineyard, where the good Pasquerel came instantly, and knelt beside her offering prayers for her recovery. But the great arrow had pierced right 102

through her shoulder, and stood out a handbreadth upon the other side. We had sent for a surgeon; but we dreaded to think of the pain she must suffer; must be suffering even now. Her face was white; her brow was furrowed.

But suddenly, as we stood looking at her in dismay, she sat up, took firm hold of the cruel barb with her own hands, and drew it steadily from the wound.

Was ever courage like hers? As the blood came gushing forth, staining her white armour red, she uttered a little cry and her lips grew pale. Yet I think the cry was less from pain than to see the marring of her shining breastplate; and the tears started to her eyes. Never before had this suffered hurt; the

sight of the envi-ous rent hurt her, I trow, as much as did the smart of her wound.

The surgeon came hurrying up, and dressed the wound with a pledget of linen steeped in oil; and the Maid lay very white and still, almost like one dying or dead, so that we all held our breath in fear. In sooth, the faintness was deathlike for awhile, and she did beckon to her priest to come close to her and receive her confession, whilst we formed round her in a circle, keeping off all idle gazers, and standing facing away from her, with bent, uncovered heads.

Was it possible that her Lord was about to take her from us, her task yet unfulfilled? It was hard to believe it, and yet we could not but fear; wherefore our hearts were heavy within us during that long hour which followed.

And the battle? It was raging still, but the heart of it seemed to be lacking.

The English were crying out that the White Witch was dead, taunting their foes with being led by a woman, and asking them where she was gone to now.

Dunois came hurrying up for news of her. The Maid roused herself and beckoned to him to come to her where she lay, and asked him of the battle. Dunois told her that the courage of the men seemed failing, that he thought of sounding the retreat.

For a few moments she lay still; her eyes bent full upon the blinding blue of the sunny sky. Then she spoke:

“Sound no retreat, my General,” she spoke, “but give the men a breathing space. Let them draw off for a brief moment. Let them eat and drink and refresh themselves. Tell them that I will come to them again; and when you and they see my standard floating against the wall, then know by that token that the place is yours.”

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A MISSION FROM GOD

Dunois went his way, and soon the sound of the struggle ceased. There came a strange hush in the heat of the noontide hours. The Maid lay still a while longer; then raising herself, asked that water should be brought to cleanse away all stains from her hands and face and her white armour.

That being done she called to D'Aulon and said to him:

"Take the great standard; plant it again upon the edge of the moat; and when the silken folds touch the tower wall, call and tell me; and you, my knights and gentlemen, be ready to follow me to victory!"

Did we doubt her ability, wounded as she was, to lead us? Not one whit. We looked to our arms; we stood silently beside her. We watched D'Aulon move quietly forward to the appointed place, and unfold the great white banner, which hung down limply in the sultry heat of the May afternoon. He stood there, and we stood beside the Maid a great while; she lay upon the heap of cloaks which had been spread to form a couch for her; her hands were clasped and her eyes closed as though in prayer.

Then a little puff of wind arose, followed by another, and yet another—soft, warm wind, but we saw the folds of the banner begin to unfurl. Little by little the breeze strengthened; breathlessly we watched the gradual lifting of the silken standard, till, with an indescribably proud motion—as though some spirit was infused into the lifeless silk—it launched itself like a living thing against the tower wall.

"It touches! It touches!" cried D'Aulon.

"It touches! It touches!" we shouted in response.

"It touches! It touches!" came an echoing wave sound from the soldiers watching from their resting places.

The Maid was on her feet in a moment. Where was the weakness, the feebleness, the faintness of the wounded girl? All gone—all swallowed up in the triumph of the victorious warrior.

"Onward! Onward, my children. Onward, de la part de Dieu! He has given you the victory! Onwards and take the tower! Nothing can resist you now!"

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Her voice was heard all over the field. The white folds of the banner still fluttered against the wall, the white armour of the Maid shone dazzling in the sunshine as she dashed forward. The army to a man sprang forward in her wake with that rush, with that power of confidence against which nothing can stand.

The English shrieked in their astonishment and affright. The dead had come to life! The White Witch, struck down as they thought by mortal wound, was charging at the head of her armies. The French were swarming up the scaling ladders, pouring into their tower, carrying all before them.

Fighting was useless. Nothing remained but flight. Helter skelter, like rabbits or rats, they fled this way and that before us. Not an Englishman remained upon the south side of the river. The French flag waved from the top of the tower.

The seven months' siege was raised by the Maid eight days after her entrance into the city.

"Entrez, entrez—de la part de Dieu—all is yours!"

Thus spoke the Maid, as we rushed the tower of the boulevard, the English flying this way and that before us. The Maid found herself face to face with the commander—that Sir William Glasdale, who had called her vile names a few days before, and had promised to burn her for a witch if once she fell into his hands.

But she had no ill words for him, as she saw him, sword in hand, seeking to make a last stand upon the drawbridge leading to Les Tourelles.

"Now yield you, Classidas," she said; "I bear you no ill will. I have great pity for your soul. Yield you, and all shall be well."

But he would not listen; his face was black like a thundercloud, and with his picked bodyguard of men, he retreated backwards, sword in hand, upon the bridge, seeking to gain the other tower, not knowing its desperate condition, and hoping there to make a last stand.

But he was not destined to achieve his end. Suddenly the bridge gave way beneath his feet, and he and his men were all precipitated into the water. It looked to us as though a miracle had been wrought before our eyes; as though the gaze of the Maid had done it. But the truth was afterwards told us, that a fire ship from the city had been sent across and had burned the bridge, cutting off the retreat of the English that way.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

And now we heard the din of battle going on within Les Tourelles; for La Hire had crossed the repaired bridge with a gallant band of soldiers, and our men, hearing the shouts of their comrades, and the cries of the trapped English, flung themselves into boats, or swam over, sword in mouth, anything to get to the scene of the fray; whilst others set to work with planks, and whatever they could lay hands upon, to mend the broken drawbridge that they might swarm across into Les Tourelles and join in the final act of victory, that should free Orleans from the iron grip in which she had been held so long.

But the face of the Maid was troubled, as she looked into the dark water which had closed over the head of Glasdale and his men. She had seized upon a coil of rope; she stood ready to fling it towards them when they rose; but encased as they were in their heavy mail, there was no rising for them. Long did she gaze into the black, bloodstained water; but she gazed in vain; and when she raised her eyes, I saw that they were swimming in tears.

"I would we might have saved them," she spoke, with a little catch in her voice, "I have such great pity for their souls!"

These were the first words I heard the Maid speak after her wonderful victory had been won; and whilst others went hither and thither, mad or drunk with joy, she busied herself about the wounded, making no distinction betwixt friend or foe, sending urgent message into the city for priests to come forth and bring the last Sacraments with them, and so long as there were any dying to be confessed or consoled, or wounded to be cared for and transported into the city, she seemed to have no thought for aught beside. Thankful joy was indeed in her heart, but her tender woman's pity was so stirred by sights of suffering and death that for the moment she could think of nothing else.

Thus the daylight faded, and we began to think of return. How shall I describe the sight which greeted our eyes in the gathering dusk, as we

looked towards the city? One might have thought that the English had fired it, so bright was the glare in which it was enveloped; but we knew better. Bonfires were blazing in every square, in every open place. Nay, more, from the very roofs of tower and church great pillars of flame were ascending to the heavens.

Joy bells had rung before this, but never with such a wild jubilation, such a clamour of palpitating triumph. The city had gone mad in its joy—and it was no marvel—and all were awaiting the return of the Maid, to whom this miraculous deliverance was due. Eight days—eight days of the Maid—and the seven-months'

siege was raised! Was it wonderful they should hunger for her presence amongst 106

them? Was it wonderful that every house should seek to hang out a white banner in honour of the Angelic Maid, and her pure whiteness of soul and body?

"I will come to you by the bridge," had been her own word; and now, behold, the bridge was there! Like Trojans had the men worked beneath the eagle eyes of La Hire. An army had already crossed from the city; now that their task was done, the Maid's white charger had been led across, and the cry was all for her, for her; that she should let the people see her alive and well, now that her task was accomplished and Orleans was free!

She let us mount her upon her horse, and D'Aulon marched in front with the great white standard. Weary and white and wan was she, with the stress of the fight, with the pain and loss of blood from her wound, above all, with her deep, unfailing pity for the sufferings she had been forced to witness, for the souls gone to their last account without the sacred offices of the Church.

All this weighed upon her young spirit, and gave a strange, ethereal loveliness to her pale face and shining eyes. Methought she seemed almost more like some angelic presence in our midst than a creature of human flesh and blood.

The Generals formed an advance guard before her. The soldiers followed, rank behind rank, in the rear. We of her household rode immediately in her wake, ready to protect her, if need be, from the too great pressure of the crowd. And so we crossed the hastily-repaired bridge, and entered by the Bride Gate—or St.

Catherine's gate, as it was equally called; for a figure of St. Catherine stands carved in a niche above the porch, and I saw the Maid glance upwards at it as she passed through, a smile upon her lips.

Shall I ever forget the thunder of applause which fell upon our ears as we passed into the city through the bridge? It was like the "sound of many waters"—

deafening in volume and intensity. And was it wonder? Had not something very like a miracle been wrought? For had not rumours reached the city many times that day of the death of the Deliverer in the hour of victory? None well knew what to believe till they saw her in their midst, and then the cry which rent the heavens was such as methinks is heard but once in a lifetime.

I know not who first spoke the words; but once spoken, they were caught up by ten thousand lips, and the blazing heavens echoed them back in great waves of rolling sound:

"THE MAID OF ORLEANS! THE MAID OF ORLEANS! Welcome, honour, 107

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glory, praise to THE MAID OF ORLEANS!"

The people were well-nigh mad with joy; they rushed upon her to kiss her hands, her knees, the folds of her banner, the neck or the flanks of her horse. In the red glare of the hundred bonfires the whiteness of her armour seemed to take a new lustre. The rent upon the shoulder could be plainly seen, showing where the arrow had torn its way. Women sobbed aloud as they looked; men cursed the hand which had shot the bolt; all joined in frantic

cheers of joy to see her riding alone, erect and smiling, though with a dreamy stillness of countenance which physical lassitude in part accounted for.

"I thank you, my friends, I thank you," she kept saying, as though no other words would come, save when now and again she would add, "But to God must you give your thanks and blessings. It is He who has delivered you."

It was not far to the house of the Treasurer, and there in the threshold stood the little Charlotte, a great wreath of bay and laurel in her tiny hands. She was lifted up in her father's strong arms, and ere the Maid was able to dismount from her horse the little one had placed the triumphal wreath upon her fair head.

O, what a shout arose! It was like the mighty burst of some great thunder-storm. The Maid, blushing now at the tumult of applause, stretched out her arms, took the little one into them, and held her in a close embrace whilst she bowed her last graceful thanks to the joy-maddened crowd. Then she slipped from her horse, and holding the little one fast by the hand, disappeared into the house, whilst the people reluctantly dispersed to hear the story all over again from the soldiers pouring in, each with some tale of his own to tell of the prowess of THE

MAID OF ORLEANS.

Yes, that was the name by which she was henceforth to be known. The city was wild with joy and pride thus to christen her. And she, having crossed by the bridge, as she had said, sat down for a brief while to that festal board which had been spread for her. But fatigue soon over-mastering her, she retired to her room, only pausing to look at us all and say:

"Tomorrow is the Lord's own day of rest. Remember that, my friends. Let there be no fighting, no pursuit, no martial exercise, whatever the foe may threaten or do. Tomorrow must be a day of thanksgiving and praise. Look to it that my words are obeyed."

They said she slept like a child that night; yet with the early light of day she

was up, kneeling in the Cathedral with her household beside her, listening to the sound of chant and prayer, receiving the Holy Sacrament, the pledge of her Lord's love.

Not until we had returned from that first duty did she listen to what was told her anent the movements of the English. They were drawn up in battle array upon the north side of the river, spoke those who had gone to the battlements to look.

Thinned as were their ranks, they were still a formidable host, and from the menace of their attitude it might be that they expected the arrival of reinforcements.

Would it not be well, spoke La Hire, to go forth against them at once, whilst the soldiers' hearts were flushed with victory, whilst the memory of yesterday's triumphs was green within them?

But the Maid, hitherto all in favour of the most dashing and daring policy, answered now, with a shake of the head:

"It is Sunday, my Generals," she replied; "the day of my Lord. The day He has hallowed to His service."

She paused a moment, and added, quite gently, and without reproach, "Had you acted as I did counsel, the English would now have had no footing on the north side of the river; they must needs have fled altogether from the neighbourhood of the city. Nevertheless, my Lord is merciful. He helps, though men hinder His designs. Let no man stir forth with carnal weapons against the foe this day. We will use other means to vanquish them."

Then turning to me, she bid me go to the Bishop, and ask him to give her audience; and shortly she was ushered into his presence, and we waited long for her to reappear.

How shall I tell of the wonderful scene which the sun looked down upon that bright May morning, when the purpose of the Maid became fully

revealed to us? Even now it seems rather as a dream, than as an incident in a terrible war.

Out upon the level plain, in full sight of the city, in full view of the serried ranks of the English army, a great white altar was set up. The army from Orleans marched out and stood bareheaded beneath the walls, unarmed by order of the Maid, save for the small weapon every man habitually carried at his belt, citizen as well as soldier. The townspeople flocked to the walls, or out into the plain, as pleased them best; and from the Renart Gate there issued forth a grave and sumptuous procession; the Bishop in his vestments, accompanied by all the ecclesias-109

tics within the city walls, each of them robed, attended by acolytes swinging cen-sers, the incense cloud ascending through the sunny air, tapers swaying in the breeze, their light extinguished by the brilliance of the sunshine.

The Maid in her white tunic, with a white mantle over her shoulders, followed with bent head, leading the little Charlotte by the hand succeeded by her household.

And there, in the sight of the rival armies, High Mass was celebrated by the Bishop, both armies kneeling devoutly, and turning towards the Altar as one man.

Never have I witnessed such a scene. Never shall I witness such another.

The Mass over, the procession filed back through the gate, both armies kneeling motionless till it had disappeared. Then the Maid rose, and we with her, and followed her in its wake, and the French army, in perfect order, re-entered the city by the appointed gates, as had been ordered.

One hour later and the Maid sent D'Aulon up to the battlements to look what the English army was doing. He returned to say that they were still drawn up in rank as before.

"Which way are their faces?" she asked.

“Their faces are turned away from the city,” was the reply.

The countenance of the Maid brightened with a great light.

“Then let them go, a part de Dieu!” she answered. “My God, I thank Thee for this great grace!”

And so, without further battle or bloodshed, the English army marched away from Orleans; and upon the next morning not a man of the foe was left; and the citizens pouring out from the town, destroyed, with acclamations of joy, those great bastilles, which had so long sheltered the foe and threatened the safety of the city.

It was a day ever to be remembered. The bells pealed ceaselessly, the houses were decked with garlands, white banners or silken pennons floated everywhere, the townsfolk arrayed themselves in holiday garb, and poured out through the gates to wander at will over the plain, so lately held by the English.

Gladness and the wonder of a great relief was stamped upon every face, and constantly songs of triumph arose or thunders of applause, of which the burden al-110

ways was—THE MAID OF ORLEANS! THE MAID OF ORLEANS!

They would have kept her with them for ever, if it might so have been. They talked wildly, yet earnestly, of building her a palace, where she should live at ease all the rest of her days, the object of universal admiration and homage.

But the Maid listened to such words, when repeated to her, with a dreamy smile. Her wound required rest; and for two days she consented to remain quiet in the house of the Treasurer, lying for the most part upon a couch in a great cool chamber, with the little Charlotte for her companion and playfellow. She sometimes rose and showed herself at a window in answer to the tumultuous shoutings of the crowd without; and she received with pleasure some great baskets and bouquets of flowers which the wives and

children of the citizens had culled for her. But she gently put aside all suggestions of rewards for herself, which some would fain have bestowed upon the Deliverer, and which men of all ranks were but too ready to claim and receive for service rendered.

"I have all that I want, myself—and more," she said; "if any would offer gifts, let them be thank offerings to the Lord. Let the poor receive alms, let Masses be sung for the souls of those killed in the war; but for me—I want nothing but the love of the people of France. I am come to do the will of my Lord. I ask only His approving smile."

And all the while she was eagerly desirous to return to the King, and urge upon him the need to repair instantly to Rheims, and there receive his crown. To her he was not truly King till he had been anointed as such. She knew that the blow to the English arms just struck must have a paralysing effect upon their forces, and that a rapid march with even a small army would be accomplished without resistance, if only it were quickly made.

I need not say that the city of Rheims lay in the very heart of territory owning the English sway. To reach that city we must perforce march right through a hostile country, garrisoned by the enemy. But of that the Maid made light.

"The hearts of the people will turn towards us," she said. "They have submitted to the English yoke; but they are Frenchmen still. Once let them see that the power of the enemy is broken, and they will rally to our standard. But precious time should not be lost. The Dauphin should place himself at the head of such an army as he can spare for the march, and journey forthwith to Rheims. There shall the crown be set upon his head—the pledge and earnest that one day he shall rule the whole realm of France, as his fathers did before him!"

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A MISSION FROM GOD

And so, before a week had passed, we set forth with the Maid to go to the King, who had by this time moved his Court from Chinon to Loches, another fortress upon the Loire, where there was space for his train, and which could, if necessary, be fortified against a siege.

It was a strange journey—more like a triumphal progress than anything we had yet met with. The fame of the Maid and her miraculous exploit in the matter of the siege of Orleans had gone before her, and from every town or village through which she passed the people flocked out to see her, bearing garlands and banners, crowding about her, asking her blessing, seeking to touch her, pouring out blessings and praises, so that the heart of anyone less filled with the humility which comes from above must needs have been altogether puffed up and filled with pride.

But it was never so with the Maid. Her gentle courtesy and devout humility never failed her. Lovingly and gratefully she received love and affection, but praise and honour she set aside, bidding all remember that to God alone belonged the issues from death, and that she was but an instrument in His mighty hands.

We wondered how she would be received at the Court, and whether La Tremouille and her other adversaries had been convinced of her divine mission, and would now remove all opposition. As we approached the fortress we saw that flags were floating from every tower; that the place wore a festive aspect, and that the town was pouring out to welcome us and gaze upon the Maid.

Then, with a great fanfare of trumpets, the gates of the fortress were flung wide open, and forth came a gay procession, in the midst of which, we could not doubt, rode the King himself.

Yes, there was no doubt of it. The crowd parted this way and that, and we saw how the young King himself was marching towards us, and at the sight

of the Maid, not only did every courtier in the train uncover, but the King himself bared his head, and bowed low to the MAID OF ORLEANS.

She was off her horse in a moment, kneeling at his feet; but he raised her instantly, held her hands in his, gave her thanks with true emotion in face and voice, and, turning to her brothers, who rode amongst us of her household, he cried to them in loud tones, saying how he had decreed that the family of the D'Arcs should henceforth have the right to quarter the hues of France on their arms! An empty honour, perhaps, to simple peasants; and yet an honour that the 112

proudest families in the land might envy!

They carried her into the fortress. The two Queens and the ladies of the Court knew not how to make enough of her. They seemed to think that our coming must be regarded as the signal for an outburst of merrymaking and carousing, such as the King found so much to his liking.

It amazed us to find him still wrapped in idle luxury, joyful, it is true, over the relief of Orleans, over the discomfiture of the English; but as indisposed as ever to take the field himself, or to put himself at the head of an army and march to his coronation as the Maid instantly urged him.

"Gentle Dauphin, the Lord would have you King of your realm; He would set the crown upon your head. He has smitten your enemies and scattered them.

Then wherefore not do His will and march to the appointed spot? All will be well if you but follow His counsels."

"But, Maiden, I have so few troops; and I have no money; and the way lies through a hostile land," the King would urge, when day after day she pleaded with him. "All my counsellors advise delay. Is it not right that I should listen to them as well as to you? Wherefore such haste? Is it not wiser to act with deliberation and prudence?"

“It is right to follow the voice of the Lord,” spoke the Maid with grave and forceful earnestness, “and to put your trust in Him rather than in any child of man.”

But the King could not be persuaded; indolence and fear held him captive, whilst his traitorous advisers sought by every means to undermine the influence of the Maid. And although in this they were not successful, for he believed in her mission, admired her prowess, and looked to her for guidance and help, he must needs listen also to these others who were of contrary mind, and so the weary days dragged on, and nothing was done.

“Noble Dauphin,” pleaded the Maid at last, “hold not such long or so many councils; or if, indeed, these be needful to you, let me, I pray you, go forth again with a small army and clear the way. And when all the country betwixt this place and Rheims has submitted to your power, then follow yourself, and take your kingdom!”

Ah me!—to think that he, a King, could consent again to let her go thus, whilst he remained in ease and indolence surrounded by his Court! But so it was.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

What she could not persuade him to do himself, she at last obtained leave to do for him, and with a joyful face she came to us with the news:

"Gentlemen and my good comrades, be ready for a speedy march; we will go forward and clear the way; and afterwards the Dauphin shall follow and be made King!"

We started forth from Selles, where the army which was to do this work had assembled. It was not so great a force as it would have been but for the hesitations of the King, and the delays imposed by his Council. For the men who had marched from Orleans, flushed with victory, eager to rush headlong upon the foe and drive them back to their own shores, had grown weary of the long waiting, and had been infected by the timidity or the treachery of those about the Court. They had melted away by little and little, carrying with them the booty they had found in the English bastilles round Orleans, glad to return to their homes and their families without further fighting, though had the Maid been permitted to place herself at their head at once, as she did desire, they would have followed her to the death.

Still, when all was said and done, it was a gallant troop that responded to her call and mustered at her summons. The magic of her name still thrilled all hearts, and throughout the march of events which followed, it was always the common soldiers who trusted implicitly in the Maid; they left doubts and disputings and unworthy jealousies to the officers and the statesmen.

The Maid went forth with a greater glory and honour than has, methinks, ever been bestowed upon woman before—certainly upon no humbly-born maiden of seventeen years. Some said that she was actually ennobled in her own person by the grant to quarter the lilies of France, and that her brothers ranked now amongst the knights and nobles. Others declared that she had refused all personal honours, and that she still remained a humble peasant, though so high in the favour of the King, and so great a personage in the realm.

As for me, I cared nothing for all this. To me she was always the Angelic Maid, heaven sent, miraculous, apart from the earth, though living amongst us and leading us on to victory.

To the army she was—and that was enough. She was the companion and friend of princes, nobles, and knights; but she was never as others were. An atmo-sphere of sanctity seemed ever to encompass her. All who approached her did her unconscious homage. None could be with her long without being conscious that she was visited by sounds unheard by them, that her eyes saw sights to which 114

theirs were closed. We were to have added witness to this in the days which followed.

So here we were gathered at Selles upon that bright June morning, just one month after the relief of Orleans. The King had presented to the Maid a great black charger; a mighty creature of immense strength and spirit, but with something of a wicked look in his rolling eyes which made me anxious as he was led forward.

The Maid in her white armour—its rent deftly mended, its silver brilliance fully restored—with her velvet white-plumed cap upon her head and a little axe in her hand, stood waiting to mount. But perhaps it was the gleaming whiteness of this slender figure that startled the horse, or else the cries and shouts of the populace at sight of the Maid excited him to the verge of terror; for he reared and plunged so madly as his rider approached that it was with difficulty he was held by two stalwart troopers, and we all begged of the Maid not to trust herself upon his back.

She looked at us with a smile, and made a little courteous gesture with her hand; then turning to the attendants she said:

“Lead him yonder to the cross at the entrance to the church; I will mount him there.”

Snorting and struggling, casting foam flakes from his lips, and fighting every inch of the way, the great charger was led whither the Maid had said. But once arrived at the foot of the cross, he suddenly became perfectly quiet. He stood like a statue whilst the Maid approached, caressed him gently with the hand from which she had drawn her mailed gauntlet, and, after speaking kindly words to him, vaulted lightly on his back.

From that moment her conquest of the fierce creature was complete. He carried her throughout that wonderful week with a gentleness and docility, and an untiring strength which was beautiful to see. The brute creation owned her sway as well as did men of understanding, who could watch and weigh her acts and deeds.

So, amid the plaudits of the people, the fanfare of trumpets, the rolling of drums, the rhythmical tread of thousands of mailed feet, we rode forth from Selles, led by the Maid, beside whom rode the King's cousin, the Duc d'Alencon, now resolved to join us, despite his former hesitancy and the fears of his wife. He had marched with us to Orleans, but had then turned back, perhaps with the not unnatural fear of again falling into the hands of the English. This had happened to him at Agincourt, and only lately had he been released.

A MISSION FROM GOD

Perhaps his fears were pardonable, and those of his wife more so. She had sought earnestly to hold him hack from this new campaign; and, when she could not prevail with him, she had addressed herself to the Maid with tears in her eyes, telling her how long had been his captivity in England, and with how great a sum he had been ransomed. Why must he adventure himself again into danger?

The Maid had listened to all with gentle sympathy. Though so fearless herself she was never harsh to those who feared, and the appeal of the Duchesse touched her.

"Fear nothing, Madame," she answered, "I will bring him back to you safe and sound. Only pray for him always—pray for us day and night. I will make his safety my special care. He shall return to you unharmed; but I pray you hinder him not from serving his country in this great hour of need."

So the Maid prevailed, and the Duc was entrusted with the command of the army, second only to the Maid herself, who was distinctly placed at the head of all—whose word was to be supreme; whilst the King's fiat went forth that no Council should be held without her, and that she was to be obeyed as the head in all things!

And men like Dunois, La Hire, and the Chevalier Gaucourt heard this without a murmur! Think of it!—a campaign conducted by a girl of seventeen, who, until a few weeks before, had never seen a shot fired in her life! Ah; but all men remembered Orleans, and were not surprised at the King's decree.

As we marched along in close array, we gathered many recruits by the way, notwithstanding that we were in the territory which had submitted to the English rule. Knights and gentlemen flocked forth from many a chateau to join themselves to the army of the miraculous Maid, whilst humble peasants,

fired by patriotism and zeal, came nightly into our camp seeking to be enrolled amid those who followed and fought beneath her banner.

And so for three days we marched, our ranks swelling, our hearts full of zeal and confidence, till news was brought us that the Duke of Suffolk, one of the bravest and most chivalrous of English knights and soldiers, had thrown himself and his followers into Jargeau, and was hastily fortifying it for a siege.

This news reached us at Orleans itself, whither we had returned in the course of our march, to be received with wild acclamations by the people there. So lov-116

ing were the citizens, that they were loth indeed to see the Maid set forth upon any mission which threatened danger to herself or her army; and their protestations and arguments so wrought upon many of the generals and officers, that they united to beg her to remain inactive awhile, and send to the King for fresh reinforcements before attempting any such arduous task.

The Maid listened with her grave eyes wide in amazement.

"You say this to me—here in Orleans! You who have seen what my Lord accomplished for us before! Shame upon you for your lack of faith—for your unworthy thoughts. We march for Jargeau at dawn tomorrow!"

Never before had we heard the Maid speak with quite such severity of tone and word. Her glorious eyes flashed with a strange lambent light. She looked every inch the ruler of men. All heads were bent before her. None dared speak a word to hinder her in her purpose.

The morrow saw us before Jargeau. Its walls were strong, it was well supplied with those great guns that belched forth fire and smoke, and scattered huge stone balls against any attacking force. But we had brought guns with us—great pieces of ordnance, to set against the city walls, and the Maid ordered these to be brought and placed in certain positions, never asking counsel, always acting on her own initiative, without hesitation and

without haste, calm and serene; with that deep, farseeing gaze of hers turned from her own position to the city and back again, as though she saw in some miraculous vision what must be the end of all this toil.

"Mort de Dieu!" cried La Hire, forgetting in his wonder the loyally kept promise to swear only by his baton, "but the Maid has nothing to learn in the art of gunnery! Where hath she learnt such skill, such wisdom! We never had guns to place at Orleans! Where has the child seen warfare, that she places her artillery with the skill of a tried general of forces!"

Ah!—where had the Maid learned her skill in any kind of warfare? Had we not been asking this from the first? This was but another development of the same miracle. For my part I had ceased now to wonder at anything which she said or did.

At daybreak on the morrow the roar of battle began. The air was shaken by the crash and thunder of the guns from both sides. But it was plain to all eyes how that the cunning disposition of our pieces, set just where they could deal most 117

effectively with a weak point in the fortifications, or a gateway less capable than others of defence, were doing far more hurt to the enemy than their fire did to us.

For the most part their balls passed harmlessly over our heads, and the clouds of arrows were for us the greater danger, though our armour protected us from overmuch damage.

But it was before Jargeau that the incident happened, which so many writers have told of the Maid and the Duc d'Alencon; how that she did suddenly call to him, nay more, drew him with her own hand out of the place where he had stood for some time near to her, saying in a voice of warning, "Have a care, my lord, there is death at hand!"

Another young knight boldly stepped into that very position from which she had snatched Alencon, and an instant afterwards his head was struck off by a

cannon ball. The Maid saw and covered her eyes for a moment with her mailed hand.

“Lord have mercy on that brave soul!” she whispered, “but why did he not heed the warning?”

Well, the fighting round Jargeau was fierce and long; but the Maid with her standard held stubbornly to the place beside the wall which she had taken up, and at sight of her, and at the sound of her clear, silvery voice, encouraging and commanding, the men came ever on and on, regardless of peril, till the scaling ladders were set, and through the breaches torn in the walls by the guns, our soldiers swarmed over into the town, shouting with the shout of those with whom is the victory.

Again the Maid triumphed. Again the hearts of the English melted within them at the sight of the White Witch, as they would tauntingly call her, even whilst they cowered and fled before her. The French were swarming into the city; the great gates were flung open with acclamations of triumph; and the Maid marched in to take possession, her white banner floating proudly before her, her eyes alight, her cheeks flushed.

One of the young gentlemen not long since added to her household, Guillame Regnault by name, from Auvergne, a very knightly youth, a favourite with us all, came striding up to the Maid, and saluting with deep reverence, begged speech with her. She was never too much occupied to receive those who came to her, and instantly he had her ear.

A MISSION FROM GOD

"My General," he said, "the Duke of Suffolk is close at hand. We pressed him hard, and it seemed as though he would die sword in hand, ere he would yield. But I did beg of him in his own tongues with which I am acquainted, not to throw away his noble life; whereupon he did look hard at me, pausing the while in thrust and parry, as all others did pause, for us to parley; and he said that he would give up his sword to THE MAID OF ORLEANS, and to none other. Wherefore I did tell him that I would run and fetch her to receive his submission, or take him to her myself. But then his mind did change, and he said to me, 'Are you noble?' So I told him that my family was noble, but that I had not yet won my knighthood's spurs.

Then forthwith did he uplift his sword, and I read his meaning in his eyes. I bent my knee, and there and then he dubbed me knight, and afterwards would have tendered me his sword, but I said, 'Not so, gentle Duke, but I hear by the sound of the silver trumpet that the Maid, our General, is close at hand. Suffer me to tell her of what has passed, and I trow that she will herself receive your sword at her hands.'"

"You did well, Sir Guillame," spoke the Maid, using the new title for the first time, whereat the youth's face kindled and glowed with pleasure. "Bring the Duke at once to me here. I will receive his surrender in person."

Truly it was a pretty sight to watch—the dignified approach of the stalwart soldier; tall, upright, a knightly figure in battered coat of mail; bleeding from several wounds, but undaunted and undauntable; and the slim, youthful white figure, with uncovered head, and a face regal in its dignity; and yet so full of sweet courtesy and honourable admiration for a beaten, yet noble foe. He gazed upon her with a great wonder in his eyes, and then, dropping upon one knee, tendered his sword to her, which the Maid took, held in her hands awhile, deep in thought, and then, with one of her wonderfully sweet smiles, held out to him again.

“Gentle Duke,” she said, “it hath been told me that you are known in France as the English Roland; and if so, I would be loth to deprive so noble a foe of his knightly weapon. Keep it, then, and all I ask of you is that you use it no more against the soldiers of France. And now, if you will let my gentlemen lead you to my tent, your hurts shall be dressed, and you shall receive such tendance as your condition requires.”

But I may not linger over every incident of that march, nor all the achievements of the Maid in the arts both of peace and of war. Towns and castles surrendered at her summons, or flung wide their gates at the news of her approach.

Sometimes we fought, but more often the very sound of her name, or the sight of the white figure upon the great black horse was sufficient, and fortress after for-119

tress upon the Loire fell before her, the English garrisons melting away or marching out, unable or unwilling to try conclusions with so notable a warrior, who came, as it were, in the power of the King of Heaven.

And not only did she achieve triumphs in war’s domains; she was equally victorious as a promoter of peace. For when the news was brought to us that the Comte de Richemont, Constable of France, but hitherto inimical to the King, desired to join us with a body of men, the Duc d’Alencon would have sent him away with insult and refused his proffer of help; but the Maid, with her gentle authority and reasonable counsel, brought him to a different frame of mind, and the Constable was received with a fair show of graciousness. And although in the days which immediately followed his aid was not of great importance (for when France had the Maid to fight for her she wanted none beside), yet in the time to come, when she was no longer there to battle for the salvation of her country, De Richemont’s loyal service to the King was of inestimable value, and had it not been for the Maid at this juncture, he might have been lost for ever to the French cause.

Her generosity shone out the more in that De Richemont was no friend to her; indeed, he had regarded her as little better than a witch before he came

under the magic of her personality. His greeting to her was rough and blunt.

“Maiden,” he said, “they tell me that you are against me, and that you are a witch. I know not whether you are from God or not. If you are from Him, I do not fear you. If you are from the devil, I fear you still less.”

She looked him full in the face, gravely at first, but with a smile kindling deep down in her eyes. Then she held out her hand in token of amity.

“Brave Constable, this is well spoken. You have no cause to fear me. You are not here by my will, it is true; for I have enough men with me to do the will of my Lord; but since you have come for love of the Dauphin, who soon must be crowned King, you are welcome indeed; and I know that you will live to serve him faithfully, though in the present you have foes at Court who turn his heart from you.”

So again she saw what lay beyond our ken, and which the future has brought to light. Alas, that she never saw the day when the King threw off his supine fear and idleness, and played the man in the conquest of his kingdom, and when De Richemont fought like a lion at his side! Yet who dare say that she did not see and did not rejoice even then? If the light came only in gleams and flashes, surely it came to her charged with an infinite joy!

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A MISSION FROM GOD

And now I must tell of the last exploit of this wonderful eight days' triumphal march through a hostile country—that battle of Patay, where, for the first time, the Maid met the foe in the open, and directed operations not against stone walls, as in every case before, but against an army drawn up in a plain.

There had been marching and counter-marching which only a map could make clear. What matters it the route we pursued, so long only as our progress had been attended by victory, and the fortresses cleared of foes, so that the journey of the King could now be taken in safety? Yet there was one more peril to face; for the army so long expected, under Sir John Fastolffe, was now heard of somewhere close at hand. He had joined himself to Talbot, so it was rumoured, and now a great host was somewhere in our neighbourhood, ready to fall upon us if they could find us, and cut us to pieces, as they had done so often before—witness the fields of Crecy, Poictiers, and Agincourt!

For the first time there was uneasiness and fear in the ranks of the soldiers.

They had infinite confidence in the Maid as a leader against stone walls, for had they not seen her take tower after tower, city after city? But she had never led them in the open field; and how could they expect to meet and triumph over the English, who had always vanquished them heretofore?

We knew not where the foe lay; all we knew was that it was somewhere close at hand; and so strong grew the fear in the hearts of Alencon and many others, that they begged the Maid to fall back upon the camp at Beaugency, and to wait there for further reinforcements. But she shook her head with decision.

"Let us find them first, and then ride boldly at them. Be not afraid; they will not stand. My Lord will give us the victory!"

And how did we come upon them at last? Verily, by a mere accident. We were marching in good order towards the great plain of Beauce, which at this time of the year was so thickly overgrown with vineyards and cornfields that we saw nothing of any lurking foe; and I trow that we were not seen of them, although a great host was lying at ease in the noontide heat, watching for our coming, I doubt not; but not yet drawn up in battle array.

A stag, frightened by our approach, broke from the thicket, and went thundering across the plain. All at once a shower of arrows let loose from English bows followed the creature's flight, together with eager shouts and laughter, betraying the presence of the unsuspecting foe.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

With a lightning swiftness the Maid grasped the whole situation. Here was an army, waiting to fight, it is true, but for the moment off its guard. Here were we, in order of march. One word from her, and our whole force would charge straight upon the foe!

And was that word lacking? Was there an instant's hesitation? Need such a question be asked of the Maid? Clear and sweet rose her wonderful voice, thrilling through the hot summer air.

"Forward, my children, forward, and fear not. Fly boldly upon them, and the day shall be yours!"

She charged, herself, at the head of one column; but La Hire, in the vanguard, was before her. With shouts of triumph and joy the old veteran and his followers thundered into the very midst of the startled English, and we followed in their wake.

The Duc d'Alencon rode beside the Maid. His face was pale with excitement—perhaps with a touch of fear. He remembered the fight at Agincourt, and the wound received there, the captivity and weary waiting for release.

"How will it end, my General, how will it end?" he said, and I heard his words and her reply, for I was riding close behind.

"Have you good spurs, M. de Duc?" she asked, with one flashing smile showing the gleam of white teeth.

"Ah Ciel!" he cried in dismay; "then shall we fly before them?"

"Not so," she answered; "but they will fly so fast before us that we shall need good spurs to keep up with them!"

And so, indeed, it was. Perhaps it was the sight of the elan of the French troops, perhaps the fear of the White Witch, perhaps because taken at unawares and in confusion, but the English for once made no stand. Fastolffe and his men, on the outer skirts of the force, rode off at once in some order, heading straight for Paris, but the braver and less prudent Talbot sought, again and again, to rally his men, and bring them to face the foe.

But it was useless. The rout was utter and complete. They could not stand

before the Maid; and when Talbot himself had fallen a prisoner into our hands, the army melted away and ran for its life, so that this engagement is called the "Chasse de Patay" to this day.

Thus the English were routed with great loss, their leading generals prisoners in the hands of the Maid, and the road for the King open, not to Rheims alone, but to the very walls of Paris, had he so chosen.

Indeed, there were those amongst us who would gladly and joyfully have marched under our great white banner right to the capital of the kingdom, and driven forth from it the English Regent and all the soldiers with him, whether Burgundians or those of his own nation. For Fastolffe was flying along the road which led him thither, and it would have been a joy to many of us to pursue and overtake, to rout him and his army, or put them to the sword, and to march up beneath the walls of Paris itself, and demand its surrender in the name of the Maid!

Those there were amongst us who even came and petitioned of her to lead us thither, and strike a death blow, once and for all, against the power of the alien foe who had ruled our fair realm too long; but though her eyes brightened as we spoke, and though all that was martial in her nature responded to the appeal thus made to her—for by this time she was a soldier through every fibre of her being, and albeit ever extraordinarily tender towards the wounded, the suffering, the dying—be they friends or foes—the soldier spirit within her burned ever higher and higher, and she knew in her clear head that humanly speaking, we could embark upon such a victorious

march as perchance the world has never seen before—certainly not beneath such a leader.

And yet she shook her head, even whilst her cheek flushed and her eyes sparkled. Little as the King had done to merit the deep devotion of such a nature as hers, the Maid's loving loyalty towards, and faith in him never wavered. Although we all saw in him the idle, pleasure loving, indolent weakling, which in those days he was, she could, or would, find no fault with him. Often as he disappointed her, she never ceased to love and honour him. Perchance it was given to her to see something of that manlier nature which must have underlaid even then that which we saw and grieved over. For she would hear no word against him. He was the centre and sun of her purpose, and her answer to us was spoken without hesitation.

"Nay, my friends, we have other work to do ere we may stand before the walls of Paris. The Dauphin must be brought to Rheims, and the crown set upon his head; for thus hath my Lord decreed, and I may not act other than as my voices 123

direct."

And when the Maid spoke thus, there was no contradicting or gainsaying her. We had such confidence in her by this, that whatever she did was right in our eyes The soldiers would have followed her eagerly to the very walls of Paris; but at her command they turned back and marched, with pennons flying and music sounding, to the Court of the King, where news of the Chasse of Patay had already preceded us, and where a joyous welcome awaited our return, though even now there were sour and jealous faces amongst the nearest advisers of the King.

If you would believe it, they still opposed the journey of the King to Rheims, working on his fears, his irresolution, his indolence, and seeking to undermine the influence of the Maid, when she went personally to see him, that she might speak with him face to face. He himself had many excuses to offer.

“Sweet Chevaliere,” he would say, calling her by one of the names which circulated through the Court, “why such haste? Is it not time that you should rest and take your ease after your many and arduous toils? Think what you have accomplished in these few days! Flesh and blood cannot continue at such a strain.

Let us now enjoy the fruits of these wonderful victories; let us feast and rejoice and enjoy a period of repose. Surely that is prudent counsel; for we must have care for our precious Maid, whom none can replace in our army, if she, by too arduous toil, should do herself an injury!”

But the Maid looked at him with her grave eyes full of earnest pleading and searching questioning.

“Gentle Dauphin, I beseech you speak not thus, nor reason after such carnal fashion. Think of what your Lord and my Lord has done for you! Think of what hath been accomplished by Him since first it was given to me to look upon your face. Think what He hath decreed and what He hath already wrought for the furtherance of His purpose towards your Majesty and this realm! And shall His will be set aside? Shall we, His children, hang back and thwart Him, just in the hour when He has put the victory in our hands? Ah, sweet Dauphin, that would be shame, indeed! That would be pain and grief to Him. Cast away all such unworthy thought!

Press on to the goal, now in sight! When you stand, crowned and anointed, King of France, you shall know the power wherewith you have been upheld, and lifted from the very mire of humiliation and disgrace!”

And at these words the Duc d’Alencon, who was by this an ardent believer in the Maid, and devotedly attached to her service, prostrated himself before the 124

King, and cried:

“Sire, this Maid speaks words of wisdom. I pray your Majesty to give full heed to what she says. Had you watched her as I have done, had you

marched with her and seen her in battle as well as in scenes of peace, you would know well that the power of God is with her. Fear not to do her bidding! Go forth as she bids.

Let us hail you King of your fair realm, and then let the Maid lead us on to other and greater victories!"

We all joined our entreaties to that of the Duke. We marvelled how the King could be so blind. But whilst others spoke and urged him, whilst we saw the light kindle in the monarch's eyes, and knew that her words had prevailed with him, she stood apart as one who dreams; and over her face there stole a strange, pale shadow, unlike anything I had seen there before. She saw nothing of the scene about her; heard no word of what passed. I think she did not even know what was meant by the great shout which suddenly went up when the King arose and declared, once and for all, that his mind was made up, that he would march with the Maid to Rheims; that he would not be daunted by the fact that in Troyes and in Chalons English garrisons yet remained, which might give him trouble in passing. What the Maid had done before she could do again. All that hitherto she had promised had been fulfilled; the fear of her had fallen upon the English, and the terror of the English no longer weighed upon the spirits of the French. He would go, come what might. He would trust in the power of the Maid to finish that which she had begun.

The shouts and plaudits of the courtiers within the castle, and of the soldiers without, when this thing was known, was evidence enough of the confidence and enthusiasm which the exploits of the Maid had awakened. Not a soldier who had followed her heretofore but would follow her now, wherever she should lead them. Surely her heart must have swelled with joy and pride as she heard the clamour of frantic applause ringing through the place.

But when she was back in her own apartments, and I was able to approach her alone, I ventured to ask her something concerning her silence of a short time back.

I always think with a great pride and tender joy of the trust and friendship which the Maid reposed in me, thereby doing me a vast honour. I had often ridden beside her on our marches, especially in the earlier days, when she

had not so many to claim her words and counsels. Methinks she had spoken to Bertrand, to me, and to Sir Guy de Laval with more freedom respecting her voices and her 125

visions than to any others, save, perhaps, the King himself, of whom she had ever said she had revelations for his ear alone. She would talk to us of things which for the most part she kept locked away in her own breast; and now when I did ask her what it was that had robbed her cheek of its colour, and wrapped her in a strange trance of grave musing, she passed her hand across her eyes, and then looked at me full, with a strange intensity of gaze.

"If I only knew! If I only knew myself!" she murmured.

"Did your voices speak to you, mistress mine? I have seen you fall into such musing fits before this, when something has been revealed; but then your eyes have been bright with joy—this time they were clouded as with trouble."

"It was when the Duke spoke of other victories," she said, dreamily; "I seemed to see before me a great confusion as of men fighting and struggling. I saw my white banner fluttering, as it were, victoriously; and yet there was a darkness upon my spirit. I saw blackness—darkness—confusion; there was battle and strife—garments rolled in blood. My own white pennon was the centre of some furious struggle. I could not see what it was, waves of black vapour rose and obscured my view. Then, in the midst of the smoke and vapour, I saw a great pillar of fire, rising up as to the very sky itself, and out of the fire flew a white dove. Then a voice spoke—one of my own voices; but in tones different from any I have heard before—'Have courage, even to death, Jeanne,' it said, 'for we will still be with you.' Then everything faded once more, and I heard only the shouting of the people, and knew that the King had made his decision, and that he had promised to receive his crown, which has waited for him so long."

As she spoke these last words, the cloud seemed to lift. Her own wonderful smile shone forth again.

“If this be so; if, indeed, the Dauphin shall be made King, what matters that I be taken away? My work will end when the crown shall be set upon his head.

Then, indeed, my soul shall say: ‘Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.’”

Her face was suddenly transfigured—radiant—with some great and glorious thought. I was glad at heart to see that the shadow had passed entirely away.

Only for a moment could any presage of personal fear cloud the sweet serenity of the Maid’s nature. And yet I went from her something troubled myself; for had I not reason to know what strange power she possessed of reading the future, and what did it mean, that confusion of battle, that intermingling of victory and defeat, 126

that darkness of smoke and blaze of fire, and the white dove flying forth unscathed?

I had heard too often the shouts of the infuriated English—”We will take you and burn you, you White Witch! You shall perish in the flames from whence the devil, your father, has sent you forth!”—not to hear with a shudder any vision of smoke and of fire. But again, had not the Maid ever prevailed in battle over her foes?

Might she not laugh to scorn all such threats?

Ah me! It is well that we may not read the future, else how could we bear the burden of life?

Joyous and triumphant was the day upon which, after some inevitable delays, we started forth—a goodly company in sooth—an army at our back, swelling with pride and triumph—to take our young King to the appointed place, and see the crown of France there set upon his head. From all quarters news was pouring in of the hopeless disruption of the power of the English after the Chasse de Patay.

Towns and villages which had submitted in sullen acquiescence before, now sent messages of loyalty and love to the King. Men flocked daily to join our standard as we marched. It was a sight to see the villagers come forth, clad in their holiday dress, eager to see and pay homage to the King, but yet more eager to look upon the white mailed figure at his side and shout aloud the name of THE MAID OF

ORLEANS!

For the place of honour at the King's right hand was reserved for the Maid, and she rode beside him without fear, without protest, without shame. Gentle, humble, and simple as she always was, she knew herself the Messenger of a greater King than that of France, and the honour done to her she accepted as done to her Lord, and never faltered beneath it, as she was never puffed up or made haughty or arrogant thereby. Nor did she ever lose her tenderness of heart, nor her quick observation of trivial detail in the absorbing interests of her greatness.

She was the first to note signs of distress upon the part of the soldiers, during this march in the midsummer heat. It was she who would suggest a halt in the noontide, in some wooded spot, that "her children" might rest and refresh themselves, and it was she who, never tired herself, would go amongst them, asking them of their well being, and bringing with her own hands some luscious fruit or some cooling draught to any soldier who might be suffering from the effects of the sun.

She who rode beside a King, who was the greatest and most renowned of that great company, would minister with her own hands to the humblest of her followers; and if ever King or Duke or courtier jested or remonstrated with her on 127

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the matter, her answer was always something like this:

"They are my own people. I am one of them. At home when any was sick in the village, I was always sent for. And wherefore not now? I am the same as

I was then. Soon I shall be going back to them, my task accomplished. Wherefore should I not be their friend and sister still?"

Then all would laugh to think of the Maid of Orleans going back to take up the life of a peasant again at Domremy; but the Maid's face grew grave and earnest as she would make reply:

"Indeed, if my work for my King is accomplished, I would fain do so. I was so happy, so happy in my sweet home."

But now our triumphal march was suddenly brought to a halt; for we were approaching the town of Troyes—a place of ill omen to France, and to the young King in particular, for there the shameful treaty was signed which robbed him of his crown; and great was the dissension amongst the King's counsellors as to what should be done.

The place was strong, the English garrison there large. A summons to surrender sent on in advance had been ignored, and now came the question —should the army pass on its way to Rheims leaving this place in the rear unattacked and untaken, or should it run the risk of a long delay, and perhaps some peril and loss in attempting to reduce it?

La Hire and Dunois spoke out insistently. At all costs the town must be taken.

It would be folly and madness to leave such a stronghold of the enemy in the rear.

Other places had fallen before the victorious Maid, and why not this? The army would go anywhere with her. The soldiers only desired to be told what she counselled, and to a man they would support her. They had lost all fear of the foe, if only the Maid led them into battle, whether in the open or against massive walls.

But as usual the King's nearest counsellors were all for delay, for avoiding battle, for retreat rather than risk. The Archbishop of Rheims, instead of being eager to push on to the place which so far was only his in name, for he had never been aught but titular Archbishop as yet, was always one with La

Tremouille in advising caution and a timid policy. Both were the enemies of the Maid, jealous of her gifts and of her influence with the King, and fearful lest her power over him should grow and increase. They even plotted that she should be excluded from the council now sitting anent this very matter, and it was only when the King and 128

the Duc d'Alencon, growing restless and impatient at her absence, desired her presence instantly, that she was sent for.

There was a grave dignity about her as she entered, which sat impressively upon her young face, so fair and sweet and gentle. She knew that timid counsels were being held, and that she, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, was being set aside—the Messenger from the Lord was being ignored. Not for herself, but for Him was her spirit moved.

The Archbishop with much circumlocution told her of the difficulty in which the King's Council was placed, and would have discoursed for long upon the situation, only that in his first pause the Maid spoke, addressing herself to the King:

"Shall I be believed if I speak my counsel?" she asked.

"You will be believed according as you speak," answered the King, thoroughly uneasy, as he ever was, when torn in twain by the multitude of counsellors with whom he must needs surround himself, though his heart ever inclined towards the Maid.

"I speak that which my Lord gives me to speak," she answered, her wonderful eyes full upon the King. "Shall I be believed?"

"If you speak that which is reasonable and profitable, I will certainly believe you," he answered, still uneasy beneath her look.

"Shall I be believed?" she questioned a third time, and there was a fire in her eyes which seemed to leap out and scathe the pusillanimous monarch as he sat quaking in his Council.

“Speak, Maiden,” he cried out then, “I at least will believe!”

“Then, noble Dauphin,” she cried, “order your army to assault this city of Troyes, where such despite has been done you, and hold no more councils; for my Lord has told me that within three days I shall lead you into the town, and false Burgundy and proud England shall there be overthrown!”

“Pouf!” cried the Chancellor, one of the Maid’s worst foes, “if there was a chance of doing such a thing in six days we would willingly wait; but—”

He stopped suddenly—none knew why, save that the Maid’s eyes were fixed

full upon him, and in those eyes was that strange shining light which some of us knew so well. She did not speak to him, but when his voice suddenly wavered and broke, she addressed herself to the King, speaking as one who repeats a message.

“You shall be master of the city of Troyes, noble Dauphin, not in six days—

but tomorrow.”

And even as she spoke, without waiting for any response, she turned and went forth, walking with her head well up, and her eyes fixed straight before her, yet as one who walks in sleep, and pays no heed to what lies before him. She called for her horse; and leaping into the saddle, rode out bareheaded in the summer sun to the camp where the soldiers lay, in doubt and wonderment at this delay; and as they sprang up to a man at sight of her, and broke into the acclamations which always greeted her appearance amongst them, she lifted up her clear ringing voice and cried:

“Be ready, my children, against the morrow, confess your sins, make your peace with God and man. For tomorrow He will lead you victorious into yonder frowning city, and not a hair of your heads shall suffer!”

They crowded about her, filling the air with shouts of triumph; they clamoured to be led at once against the grim frowning walls. I verily

believe, had she put herself at their head then and there, that nothing could have withstood the elan of their attack; but the Maid received her orders from a source we knew not of, and fleshly pride never tempted her to swerve from the appointed path. She smiled at the enthusiasm of the men, but she shook her head gently and firmly.

"Do my bidding, my children, confess yourselves and pray till set of sun.

Then I will come to you and set you your appointed tasks, and tomorrow I will lead you into the city!"

That night there was no sleep for the Maid or for her soldiers. At no time was it dark, for midsummer was over the land, and the moon hung in the sky like a silver lamp when the sun had set. The Maid came forth as she had said with the last of the daylight, and at her command a great mound was speedily raised, of earth, brushwood, faggots, stones—anything that the soldiers could lay hands upon; and when this hillock was of height sufficient to satisfy the young General, the great guns were brought and set upon it in such masterly fashion, and in such a commanding way, that La Hire, Dunois and Xantrailles, who came to see, marvelled at it, and we could note from the top of this earthwork that within the city 130

great commotion reigned, and that it was as busy as a hive that has been disturbed.

As the first mystic glow of the summer's dawn kindled in the eastern sky, the Maid stood, a white luminous figure in full armour, poised lightly on the top of one of our pieces of ordnance, her drawn sword in her hand, pointing full in the direction of the city.

I have heard since from those within that the anxious garrison and citizens saw this motionless figure, and cried aloud in terror and awe. To them it seemed as though St. Michael himself had come down to fight against them, and terror stricken they ran to the governors of the city and implored that surrender might be made, ere the heavens opened and rained lightnings down upon them.

And thus it came about that ere the dawn had fairly come, an embassy was sent to the King and terms of surrender offered. The King, from motives of policy or fear, the Maid, from pity and generosity, accepted the messengers graciously, and granted the garrison leave to depart with their horses and their arms, if the town were peacefully given up; and thus it came about that after the King had finished his night's slumber, and the Maid had done her gracious part in redeem-ing and releasing the French prisoners, which, but for her, would have been carried away by the retiring English and Burgundians, she rode beside the King, and at the head of the cheering and tumultuous army into the city of Troyes, which had surrendered to the magic of her name without striking a blow.

"O my Chevaliere," cried the happy and triumphant monarch, as he turned to look into her grave serene face. "What a wonderful Maid you are! Stay always with me, Jeanne, and be my friend and General to my life's end."

She looked at him long and earnestly as she made answer:

"Alas, Sire, it may not be! For a year—perhaps for a year. But I shall last no longer than that!"

Shall I ever forget that evening? No, not if I live to be a hundred!

June had well-nigh passed ere we began our march from Gien—that triumphant march headed by the King and the Maid—and July had run half its course since we had been upon the road. For we had had a great tract of country to traverse, and a large army must needs have time in which to move itself.

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And now upon a glorious golden evening in that month of sunshine and summertide, we saw before us—shining in a floating mist of reflected glory—the spires and towers, the walls and gates of the great city of Rheims—the goal of our journeyings—the promised land of the Maid's visions and voices!

Was it indeed a city of stone and wood which shone before us in the level rays of the sinking sun? I asked that question of myself; methinks that the Maid was asking it in her heart; for when I turned my eyes upon her, I caught my breath in amaze at her aspect, and I know now what it is to say that I have looked upon the face of an angel!

She had dropped her reins, and they hung loose upon her horse's neck; her hands were clasped together in a strange rapture of devotion. Her head was bare; for she often gave her headpiece to her page to carry for her, and in the evenings did not always replace it by any other covering. Her hair had grown a little longer during these months, and curled round her face in a loose halo, which in the strong and ruddy light of the setting sun, shone a glorious golden colour, as though a ray of heavenly light were enmeshed within it.

But it was the extraordinary brightness of those great luminous eyes, the rapt and intense expression of her face which arrested my attention, and seemed for a moment to stop the triumphant beating of my heart. It was not triumph which I read there, though there was joy and rapture and peace, beyond all power of understanding. It was the face of one who sees heaven open, and in the wonder and awe of the beatific vision forgets all else, and feels not the fetters of the flesh, heeds not those things which must needs intervene ere the spirit can finally be loosed to enter upon blessedness and rest, but soars upwards at once into heavenly regions.

The town of Rheims lay before us. The inhabitants were pouring forth to meet us. We saw them coming over the plain, as we watched the walls and

buildings, glowing in the mystic radiance of the summer's evening, loom up larger and grander and sharper before us. It was no dream!

And yet who would have thought it possible three months ago? In mid-April the iron grip of the English lay all over the land north of the Loire, and the south lay supine and helpless, stricken with the terror of the victorious conqueror. Orleans was at its last gasp, and with its fall the last bulwark would be swept away; all France must own the sway of the conqueror. The King was powerless, indolent, ready to fly at the first approach of peril, with no hope and no desire for rule, doubtful even if he had the right to take upon himself the title of King, careless in 132

his despair and his difficulties. The army was almost non-existent; the soldiers could scarce be brought to face the foe. One Englishman could chase ten of ours.

The horror as of a great darkness seemed to have fallen upon the land.

And yet in three months' time what had not been accomplished!

The King was riding into the ancient city of Rheims, to be crowned King of France; Orleans was relieved; a score of fortresses had been snatched from the hands of the English. These were fleeing from us in all directions back to Paris; where they hoped to make a stand against us, but were in mortal fear of attack; and now it was our soldiers who clamoured to be led against the English—the English who fled helter-skelter before the rush and the dash of the men whom heretofore they had despised.

And all this was the work of yonder marvellous Maid—a girl of seventeen summers, who, clad in white armour, shining like an angelic vision, was riding at the King's side towards the city.

He turned and looked at her at the moment my gaze was thus arrested, and I saw his face change. He put out his hand and touched hers gently; but he had to touch her twice and to speak twice ere she heard or knew.

"Jeanne—fairest maiden—what do you see?"

She turned her gaze upon him—radiant, misty, marvellous.

"I see the Land of Promise," she answered, speaking very low, yet so clearly that I heard every word. "The chosen of the Lord will go forward to victory. He will drive out the enemy before the face of him upon whom He shall set the crown of pure gold. France shall prosper—her enemies shall be confounded. What matter whose the work, or whose the triumph? What matter who shall fall ere the task be accomplished—so that it be done according to the mind of the Lord?"

"And by the power of the Maid—the Deliverer!" spoke the King, a gush of gratitude filling his heart, as he looked first at the slight figure and inspired face of the Maid, and then at the city towards which we were riding, the faint clash of joy bells borne softly to our ears. "For to you, O my General, I owe it all; and may the Lord judge betwixt us twain if I share not every honour that I may yet win with her who has accomplished this miracle!"

But her gaze was full of an inexplicable mystery.

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"Nay, gentle Dauphin, but that will not be," she said; "One shall increase, another shall decrease—hath it not ever been so? My task is accomplished. My work is done. Let another take my place after tomorrow, for my mission will be accomplished."

"Never!" cried the King firmly and earnestly, and when I heard him thus speak my heart rejoiced; for I, no more than others, believed that success could attend the King's further efforts without her who was the inspiration of the army, and the worker of these great miracles which had been wrought. How often have I wondered since—but that is no part of my story. Let me tell those things which did happen to us.

How can I tell of our entry into Rheims? Have I not spoken in other places of other such scenes, often in the early dusk of evening, when whole cities flocked out to meet the Maid, to gaze in awe and wonder upon her, to kiss her hands, her feet, her knees, the neck and flanks of the horse she rode, and even his very foot-prints in the road, as he moved along with his precious burden?

As it was there, so was it here—the same joy, the same wonder, the same enthusiasm. The King was greeted with shouts and acclamations, it is true; but the greater admiration and wonder was reserved for the Maid, and he knew it, and smiled, well pleased that it should be so; for at that time his heart was full of a great gratitude and affection, and never did he seek to belittle that which she had wrought on his behalf.

Thankfulness, peace, and happiness shone in the eyes of the Maid as she rode; but there was a nearer and more personal joy in store for her; for as we passed through the town, with many pauses on account of the greatness of the throng, pouring in and out of the churches (for it was the vigil of the Madelaine), or crowding about the King and the Maid, she chanced to lift her eyes to the windows of an inn in the place, and behold her face kindled with a look different from any I had seen there before, and she looked

around for me, and beckoning with her hand, she pointed upwards, and cried in tones of strange delight and exultation:

“My father, fair knight, my father! I saw his face!”

Now, I knew that Jacques d’Arc had been greatly set against his daughter’s mission, and it had been declared that he had disowned her, and would have withheld her from going forth, had such a thing been within his power. She had 134

never received any message of love or forgiveness from him all these weeks, though her two younger brothers had joined the army, and were always included in her household. So that I was not surprised at the kindling of her glance, nor at the next words she spoke.

“Go to him, my friend; tell him that I must needs have speech with him. Ah, say that I would fain return home with him when my task is done, if it be permitted me. Go, find him speedily, ere he can betake himself away. My father! My father!

I had scarce hoped to look upon his face again!”

So whilst the King and the Maid and their train rode on to the huge old palace of the Archeveche, hard by the Cathedral, I slipped out of my place in the ranks, and passed beneath the archway into the courtyard of the old inn, where the Maid declared that she had seen the face of her father looking forth.

I had not much trouble in finding him; for already a whisper had gone forth that certain friends and relatives of the wonderful Maid had journeyed from Domremy to witness her triumphant entry into Rheims. Indeed, some of these had followed us from Chalons, all unknown to her, who would so gladly have welcomed them. Chalons, though a fortified town, and with a hostile garrison, had opened its gates to us without resistance, feeling how hopeless it was to strive against the power of the Maid.

The wonder and awe inspired by her presence, and by her marvellous achievements, had sunk deeply into the spirits of these simple country folk, who had only heretofore known Jeanne d'Arc as a gentle village maiden, beloved of all, but seeming not in any way separated from her companions and friends. Now they had seen her, white and glistening, in martial array, riding beside a King, an army at her back, acclaimed of the multitude, the idol of the hour, a victor in a three months' campaign, the like of which never was before, and methinks can never be again.

So now, when I stood face to face with the rugged prud'homme, the father of this wonderful Maid, and told him of her desire to speak with him upon the morrow, when the King should have received his crown, I saw that many emotions were struggling together in his breast; for his soul revolted yet, in some measure, at the thought of his girl a leader of men, the head of an army, the friend of kings and courtiers, whilst it was impossible but that some measure of pride and joy should be his at the thought of her achievements, and in the assurance that at last the King, whom loyal little Domremy had ever served and loved, was to receive his crown, and be the anointed sovereign of the land.

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"She desires speech with me? She, whom I have seen riding beside the King? What have I to do with the friends of royalty? How can she consort with princes and with peasants?"

"Let her show you that herself, my friend," I answered. "We, who have companied with her through these wonderful weeks, know well how that she is no less a loving daughter, a friend of the people, for being the friend of a King and the idol of an army. Give me some message for her. She longs for a kind word from you. Let me only take her word that you will see her and receive her as a father should receive his child, and I trow that it will give her almost the same joy as the knowledge that by her miraculous call she has saved her country and crowned her King."

I scarce know what answer Jacques d'Arc would have made, for he was a proud, unbending man, and his face was sternly set whilst I pleaded with him. But there were others from Domremy, entirely filled with admiration of the Maid, and with desire to see her again; and their voices prevailed, so that he gave the answer for which I waited. He would remain at the inn over the morrow of the great function of the coronation, and would receive his daughter there, and have speech with her.

"Tell her that I will take her home with me, if she will come," he spoke; "for she herself did say that her work would be accomplished when the crown was placed upon the King's head. Let her be true to her word; let her return home, and become a modest maiden again beneath her mother's care, and all shall be well betwixt us. But if pride and haughtiness possess her soul, and she prefers the company of courtiers and soldiers to that of her own people, and the life of camps to the life of home, then I wash my hands of her. Let her go her own way. She shall no longer be daughter of mine!"

I did not tell those words to the Maid. My lips refused to speak them. But I told her that her father would remain in the place till she had leisure to have speech with him; and her eyes kindled with joy at hearing such news, for it

seemed to her as though this would be the pledge of his forgiveness, the forgiveness for which she had longed, and for the lack of which none of her triumphs could altogether compensate.

There was no sleep for the city of Rheims upon that hot summer's night.

Although the coming of the King had been rumoured for some time, it had never been fully believed possible till news had been brought of the fall of Troyes, and 136

the instant submission of Chalons. Then, and only then, did citizens and prelates truly realise that the talked-of ceremony could become an accomplished fact, and almost before they had recovered from their amazement at the rapidity of the march of events, courtiers brought in word that the King and his army were approaching.

So all night long the people were hard at work decorating their city, their churches, above all their Cathedral; and the priests and prelates were in close conference debating what vestments, what vessels, what rites and ceremonies should be employed, and how the lack of certain necessary articles, far away at St. Denis, could be supplied out of the rich treasuries of the Cathedral.

As the dawn of the morning brightened in the east, the sun rose upon a scene of such splendour and magnificence as perhaps has seldom been witnessed at such short notice. The whole city seemed one blaze of triumphal arches, of summer flowers, of costly stuffs and rich decoration. Every citizen had donned his best and brightest suit; the girls and children had clothed themselves in white, and crowned themselves with flowers. Even the war-worn soldiers had polished their arms, furbished up their clothes, and borrowed or bought from the townsfolk such things as were most lacking; and now, drawn up in array in the great square, with tossing banners, and all the gay panoply of martial glory, they looked like some great victorious band—as, indeed, they were—celebrating the last act of a great and wonderful triumph.

As for the knights, nobles, and courtiers, one need not speak of the outward glory of their aspect—the shining armour, the gay dresses, the magnificent trappings of the sleek horses—that can well be pictured by those who have ever witnessed a like brilliant scene.

But for the first part of the day, with its many and varied ceremonies, there was lacking the shining figure of the Maid; nor did the King himself appear. But forth from the Palace of the Archeveche rode four of the greatest and most notable peers of the realm, attended by a gorgeous retinue; and with banners waving, and trumpets blowing great martial blasts, they paced proudly through the streets, between the closely-packed ranks of soldiers and citizens, till they reached the ancient Abbey of Sainte Remy, where the monks of Sainte Ampoule guard within their shrine the holy oil of consecration, in that most precious vial which, they said, was sent down from heaven itself for the consecration of King Clovis and his successors.

Upon bended knees and with bared heads these great peers of France then

took their solemn oath that the sacred vial should never leave their sight or care, night or day, till it was restored to the keeping of the shrine from which the Abbot was about to take it. Then, and only then, would the Abbot, clothed in his most sumptuous vestments, and attended by his robed monks, take from its place that holy vessel, and place it in the hands of the messengers—Knights Hostages, as they were termed for the nonce—and as they carried it slowly and reverently forth, and retraced their steps to the Cathedral, accompanied now by the Abbot and monks, every knee was bent and every head bowed.

But all the while that this ceremony was taking place, the Maid was shut up in her room in the Palace, dictating a letter of appeal to the Duke of Burgundy, and praying him in gentle, yet authoritative terms, to be reconciled to his King, join hands with him against the English foe, and then, if need there were to fight, to turn his arms against the Saracens, instead of warring with his brethren and kins-men. I trow that this thing was urged upon her at this time, in that she believed her mission so nearly

accomplished, and that soon she would have no longer right to style herself "Jeanne the Maid," and to speak with authority to princes and nobles.

As yet she was the appointed messenger of Heaven. Her words and acts all partook of that almost miraculous character which they had borne from the first. I will not quote the letter here; but it is writ in the page of history; and I ask of all scholars who peruse its words, whether any village maiden of but seventeen years, unlettered, and ignorant of statecraft, could of herself compose so lofty and dignified an appeal, or speak with such serene authority to one who ranked as well-nigh the equal of kings. It was her last act ere she donned her white armour, and passed forth from her chamber to take part in the ceremony of the coronation. In some sort it was the last of her acts performed whilst she was yet the deliverer of her people.

When I looked upon those words, long after they had been penned, I felt the tears rising in mine eyes. I could have wept tears of blood to think of the fate which had befallen one whose thoughts were ever of peace and mercy, even in the hour of her supremest triumph.

How can my poor pen describe the wonders of the great scene, of which I was a spectator upon that day? Nay, rather will I only seek to speak of the Maid, and how she bore herself upon that great occasion. She would have been content with a very humble place in the vast Cathedral today; she had no desire to bear a part in the pageant which had filled the city and packed the great edifice from end to end.

A MISSION FROM GOD

But the King and the people willed it otherwise. The thing which was about to be done was the work of the Maid, and she must be there to see all, and the people should see her, too—see her close to the King himself, who owed to her dauntless courage and devotion the crown he was about to assume, the realm he had begun to conquer.

So she stood near at hand to him all through that long, impressive ceremony—a still, almost solemn figure in her silver armour, a long white velvet mantle, embroidered in silver, flowing from her shoulders, her hand grasping the staff of her great white banner, which had been borne into the Cathedral by D'Aulon, and beside which she stood, her hand upon the staff.

She was bareheaded, and the many-coloured lights streamed in upon her slim, motionless figure, and the face which she lifted in adoration and thanksgiving. I trow that none in that vast assembly, who could see her as she thus stood, doubted but that she stood there the accredited messenger of the Most High. The light from Heaven itself was shining on her upturned face, the reflection of an unearthly glory beamed in her eyes. From time to time her lips moved, as though words of thanksgiving broke silently forth; but save for that she scarcely moved all through the long and solemn ceremony. Methinks that she saw it rather in the spirit than in the flesh; and the knights and nobles who had poured in from the surrounding country to witness this great function, and had not companied with the Maid before, but had only heard of her fame from afar, these regarded her with looks of wonder and of awe, and whispering together, asked of each other whether in truth she were a creature of flesh and blood, or whether it were not some angelic presence, sent down direct from Heaven.

And so at last the King was anointed and crowned! The blare of the thousand trumpets, the acclamations of a vast multitude proclaimed the thing done!

Charles the Seventh stood before his people, their King, in fact as well as in name.

The work of the Maid was indeed accomplished!

The ceremony was over. The Dauphin stood in our midst a crowned and anointed King. We were back in the great hall of the Archeveche, and the thunders of triumphant applause which had been restrained within the precincts of the sacred edifice now broke forth again, and yet again, in long bursts of cheering, which were echoed from without by the multitudes in the street and great square Place, and came rolling through the open windows in waves of sound like the beating of the surf upon the shore.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

The King stood upon a raised dais; his chiefest nobles and peers around him. He was magnificently robed, as became so great an occasion, and for the first time that I had ever seen, he looked an imposing and a dignified figure. Something there was of true kingliness in his aspect. It seemed as though the scene through which he had passed had not been without effect upon his nature, and that something regal had been conveyed to him through the solemnities which had just taken place.

The Maid was present also; but she had sought to efface herself in the crowd, and stood thoughtfully apart in an embrasure of the wall, half concealed by the arras, till the sound of her name, proclaimed aloud in a hundred different tones, warned her that something was required of her, and she stepped forward with a questioning look in her startled eyes, as though just roused from some dream.

She had been one of the first to prostrate herself at the new-made King's feet when the coronation ceremony was over; and the tears streaming down her face had been eloquent testimony of her deep emotion. But she had only breathed a few broken words of devotion and of joy, and had added something in a choked whisper which none but he had been able to hear.

"The King calls for the Maid! The King desires speech with the Maid!" such was the word ringing through the hall; and she came quietly forth from her nook, the crowd parting this way and that before her, till she was walking up through a living avenue to the place where the King was now seated upon a throne-like chair on the dais at the far end of the hall.

As she came towards him the King extended his hand, as though he would meet her still rather as friend than as subject; but she kneeled down at his feet, and pressing her lips to the extended hand, she spoke in a voice full of emotion:

“Gentle King, now is the pleasure of God fulfilled towards you. Now is the will of my Lord accomplished. To Him alone be the praise and glory! It was His will that I should be sent before you to raise the siege of Orleans, to lead you to this city of Rheims, there to receive your consecration. Now has He shown to all the world that you are the true King—that it is His will you should reign over this fair realm, that this kingdom of France belongs to you and you alone. My task is now accomplished. His will in me is fulfilled. Go forward, then, noble King—strong in the power of your kingly might and right, doubting not that He will aid you still; though He will work with other instruments, with other means, for my task in this is now accomplished!”

A MISSION FROM GOD

There was a little stir and thrill throughout the hall as these words were spoken. Dismay fell upon many, wonder upon all, triumph gleamed from the eyes of a few; but most men looked one at the other in consternation. What did she mean by these words?—this Heaven-sent Maid to whom we owed so much? Surely she did not think to leave us just in the hour of her supreme triumph? How could we hope to lead on the armies to fresh victories, if the soldiers were told that the Maid would no longer march with them? Who would direct us with heavenly counsel, or with that marvellous clearness of vision which is given only to a few in this sinful world, and to those only whose hearts are consecrated by a great devotion, and a great love? She could not mean that! She loved France with an overwhelm-ing fervour. She was devoted to the service of the King, in whom she had never been able or willing to see wrong. She knew her power with the army; she loved the rough soldiers who followed her unshrinkingly in the teeth of the very fiercest perils, and who would answer to her least command, when they would obey none other general.

O no, she could not think of deserting France in this her hour of need! Much had been done; but much yet remained to do. If she were to quit her post, there could be no telling what might not follow. The English, cowed and bewildered now, might well pluck up heart of grace, and sweep back through the country once owning their sway, driving all foes before them as in the days of old. The victories won in these last weeks might soon be swallowed up in fresh defeat and disaster. How could we expect it to be otherwise if the presence of the Maid were withdrawn?

These and a hundred other questions and conjectures were buzzing through the great hall. Wonder and amaze was on every face. The King himself looked grave for a moment; but then his smile shone out carelessly gay and confident. He looked down at the Maid, and there was tender friendliness in his glance. He spoke nothing to her at the first as to what she had said; he merely asked of her a question.

“My Chevaliere, my guardian angel, tell me this, I pray. You have done all these great things for me; what am I to do in return for you?”

She raised her eyes towards him, and the light sprang into them—that beautiful, fearless light which shone there when she led her soldiers into battle.

“Go forward fearlessly, noble King. Go forward in the power of your anointing; and fear nothing. That is all I ask of you. Do that, and you will give to me my heart’s desire.”

"We will talk of that later, Jeanne," he answered, "I have many things to speak upon that matter yet. But today I would ask you of something different. You have done great things for me; it is not fitting that you should refuse to receive something at my hands. This day I sit a King upon my father's throne. Ask of me some gift and grace for yourself—I your King and your friend demand it of you!"

It was spoken in a right kingly and gracious fashion, and we all held our breath to listen for the answer the Maid should give. We had known her so long and so well, and we had learned how little she desired for herself, how hard it was to induce her to express any wish for her own gratification. She was gentle and gracious in her acceptance of the gifts received from friends who had furnished her from the beginning with such things as were needful for her altered life; but she had ever retained her simplicity of thought and habit; and though often living in the midst of luxury and extravagance, she was never touched by those vices herself. And now she was bidden to ask a boon; and she must needs do it, or the displeasure of the King would light upon her.

He had raised her to her feet by this time, and she stood before him, a slim boy-like figure in her white point-device dress, her cheeks a little flushed, her slender fingers tightly entwined, the breath coming and going through her parted lips.

"Gentle King," she answered, and her low full voice thrilled through the hall to its farthermost end in the deep hush which had fallen upon it, "there is one grace and gift that I would right gladly ask of you. Here in this city of Rheims are assembled a few of mine own people from Domremy; my father, my uncle, and with them some others whom I have known and loved from childhood. I would ask this thing of you, noble King. Give me at your royal pleasure a deed, duly signed and sealed by your royal hand, exempting the village of Domremy, where I was born, from all taxes such as are levied elsewhere throughout the realm. Let me have this deed to give to those who

have come to see me here, and thus when I return with them to my beloved childhood's home, I shall be witness to the joy and gladness which such a kingly boon will convey. Grant me this—only this, gentle King, and you will grant me all my heart desires!"

The King spoke aside a few words to one of those who stood about him, and this person silently bowed and quitted the hail; then he turned once more to the Maid, standing before him still with a happy and almost childlike smile playing over her lips.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

“The thing shall be done, Jeanne,” he said; “and it shall be done right soon.

The first deed to which I set my hand as King shall be the one which shall for ever exempt Domremy from all taxation. You shall give it to your father this very day, to take home with him when he goes. But as for those other words of yours—what did you mean by them? How can you witness the joy of a distant village, when you will be leading forward the armies of France to fresh victories?”

He gazed searchingly into her face as he spoke; and she looked back at him with a sudden shrinking in her beautiful eyes.

“Sire,” she faltered—and anything like uncertainty in that voice was something new to us—”of what victories do you speak? I have done my part. I have accomplished that which my Lord has set me to do. My task ends here. My mission has been fulfilled. I have no command from Him to go forward. I pray you let me return home to my mother and my friends.”

“Nay, Jeanne, your friends are here,” spoke the King gravely, “and your country is your mother. Would you neglect to hear her cry to you in the hour of her need? Her voice it was that called you forth from your obscurity; she calls you yet.

Will you cease to hear and to obey?”

The trouble and perplexity deepened in the eyes of the Maid.

“My voices have not bidden me to go forward,” she faltered.

“Have they bidden you to go back—to do no more for France?”

“No,” she answered, throwing back her head, her eyes kindling once again with ardour; “they have not bidden me return, or I would have done it without wavering. They tell me nothing, save to be of a good heart and

courage. They promise to be with me—my saints, whom I love. But they give me no commands. I see not the path before me, as I have seen it hitherto. That is why I say, let me go home. My work is done; I have no mission more. Shall I take upon me that which my Lord puts not upon me—whether it be honour or toil or pain?"

"Yes, Jeanne, you shall take that upon you which your country calls upon you to take, which your King puts upon you, which even your saints demand of you, though perchance with no such insistence as before, since that is no longer needed. Can you think that the mind of the Lord has changed towards me and towards France? Yet you must know as well as I and my Generals do, that without you to lead them against the foe, the soldiers will waver and tremble, and per-143

chance turn their backs upon our enemies once more. You they will follow to a man; but will they follow others when they know that you have deserted them?

You tell me to go forward and be of good courage. How can I do this if you turn back, and take with you the hearts of my men?"

"Sire, I know not that such would be the case," spoke the Maid gravely.

"You stand amongst them now as their crowned and anointed King. What need have they of other leader? They have followed me heretofore, waiting for you; but now—"

"Now they will want you more than ever, since you have ever led them to victory!" cried the King; and raising his voice and looking about him, especially to those generals and officers of his staff who had seen so much of the recent events of the campaign, he cried out:

"What say you, gentlemen? What is our chance to drive away the English and become masters of this realm if the MAID OF ORLEANS take herself away from us, and the soldiers no longer see her standard floating before them, or hear her voice cheering them to the battle?"

Some of those present looked sullenly on the ground, unwilling to own that the Maid was a power greater than any other which could be brought into the field; but there were numbers of other and greater men, who had never denied her her meed of praise, though they had thwarted her at times in the council room; and these with one accord declared that should the Maid betake herself back to Domremy, leaving the army to its fate, they would not answer for the effect which this desertion would have, but would, in fact, almost expect the melting away of the great body of the trained soldiers and recruits who had fought with her, and had come to regard her presence with them as the essential to a perfect victory.

But we were destined to have a greater testimony than this, for a whisper of what was passing within the great hall had now filtered forth into the streets, and all in a moment we were aware of a mighty tumult and hubbub without, a clamour of voices louder and more insistent than those which had hailed the King a short time before, and the words which seemed to form themselves out of the clamour and gradually grow into the burden of the people's cry was the repeated and vehement shout, "THE MAID OF ORLEANS! THE MAID OF ORLEANS! We will fight if the Maid goes with us—without her we be all dead men!"

They came and told us what the crowd of soldiers in the street was shouting; they begged that the Maid would show herself at some window, and promise

that she would remain with the army. Indeed, there was almost a danger of riot and disaster if something were not done to quell the excitement of the soldiery and the populace; and at this news the Maid suddenly drew her slender, drooping figure to its full height, and looked long and steadfastly at the King.

"Sire," she said, "I give myself to you and to France. My Lord knows that I seek in this to do His will, though differently from heretofore. You will be disappointed. Many will misjudge me. There will be sorrow and anguish of heart as well as triumph and joy. But if my country calls, I go forth gladly to meet her cry—

even though I go to my death!"

I do not know how many heard her last words; for they were drowned in the roar of joyful applause which followed her declaration. The King gave her his hand, and led her forth upon a balcony, where the great concourse in the street below could see them; and by signs he made them understand that she would continue with him as one of his Commanders-in-Chief; and in hearing this the city well nigh went mad with joy; bonfires blazed and bells pealed madly; and the cry heard in the streets was less "Long live the King!" than that other frantic shout,

"THE MAID OF ORLEANS! THE MAID OF ORLEANS!"

But the Maid returned to her apartments with a strange look upon her face; and she held out her hand to me as one who would fain ask help and sympathy of a trusted comrade, as I am proud to think I was regarded at that time by her.

"The King's word has prevailed, O my friend," she said, "but I would that I were sure it will be for the best!"

"How can it be otherwise than for the best?" I answered as I held her hand in mine, and looked searchingly into her fair, grave face. "Will not your Lord help you yet? Do not all men trust in you? Will not the soldiers fight for and with you?

And are you not sure in your heart that the cause of the French King will yet triumph?"

Her eyes were misty with unshed tears as she made reply:

"I know that my Lord will not desert me; and I trust I may serve Him yet, and the King whom I love. I know that all will be well—at the last—for this fair realm of France. But I have no commission direct from my Lord as I have had hitherto. My voices yet speak gentle and kindly words. I trow that my saints will watch over me, and that they will give me strength to strive and to overcome. For myself I fear not—I am ready to die for my King and my country if that be the will of God.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

Only the shadow lies athwart my path, where until today all was brightness and sunshine. It would have been so sweet to go home to my mother, to see the Fairy Tree, and the old familiar faces, and listen once more to the Angelus bell! I had thought that I should by this have earned my rest. I had not thought that with so many to serve him, the King would have had further use for me."

"Yet how could it be otherwise, my General, when the soldiers will follow you alone?—when all look to you as their champion and their friend?"

"Nay, but I have enemies too," she answered sadly, "and I know that they will work me ill—greater ill in the future than they have had power to do heretofore, when I was watched over and guarded for the task that was set me. That task is now accomplished. Can I look to receive the same protection as before? The Lord may have other instruments prepared to carry on His work of deliverance. I doubt not that He will use me yet, and that I shall never be forsaken; but my time will not be long. I shall only last a year. Let the King use me for all that I am worth!—

after that he must look for others to aid him!"

I could not bear to hear her speak so. I would have broken in with protestations and denials; but something in the look upon her face silenced me. My heart sank strangely within me, for had I not learned to know how truly the Maid did read that which the future hid from our eyes? I could only seek to believe that in this she might be mistaken, since she herself did say how that things were something different with her now.

She seemed to read the thoughts that crowded my brain; for she looked into my face with her tender, far-seeing smile.

"You are sad, my kind friend, my faithful knight, and sometimes mine own heart is sad also. But yet why should we fear? I know that I have enemies,

and I know that they will have more power to hurt me in the times that are coming, than has been permitted hitherto, yet—"

With an uncontrollable impulse I flung myself at her feet.

"O my General—O my dear lady—speak not such things—it breaks my heart. Or if, indeed, the peril be so great, then let all else go, and bid your father to take you back to Domremy with him. There, at least, you will be safe and happy!"

Her eyes were deep with the intensity of her emotion.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"It may not be," she said with grave gentleness and decision. "I had hoped it for myself, but it may not be. My word is pledged. My King has commanded. I, too, must learn, in my measure, the lesson of obedience, even unto death!"

Her hands were clasped; her eyes were lifted heavenwards. A shaft of light from the sinking sun struck in through the coloured window behind her, and fell across her face with an indescribable glory. I was still upon my knees and I could not rise, for it seemed to me as though at that moment another Presence than that of the Maid was with us in the room. My limbs shook. My heart seemed to melt within me; and yet it was not fear which possessed me, but a mysterious rapture the like of which I can in no wise fathom.

How long it lasted I know not. The light had faded when I rose to my feet and met her wonderful gaze. She spoke just a few words.

"Now you know what help is given us in our hours of need. My faithful knight need never mourn or weep for me; for that help and comfort will never be withheld. Of this I have the promise clear and steadfast!"

I was with her when she went to see her father. It was dark, and the old man sat with his brother-in-law, Durand Laxart—he who had helped her to her first interview with De Baudricourt—in one of the best rooms of the inn. Since it had been known that these men were the kinsfolk of the Maid, everything of the best had been put at their disposal by the desire of the citizens, and horses had been provided for them for their return to Domremy. For the city of Rheims was filled with joy at that which had been accomplished, and the Maid was the hero of the hour.

But I could see that there was a cloud upon the old man's face—the father's; and he did not rise as his daughter entered—she before whom nobles had learnt to bend, and who sat at the Council of the King. His sombre eyes

dwelt upon her with a strange expression in their depths. His rugged face was hard; his knotted hands were closely locked together.

The Maid gazed at him for a moment, a world of tender emotions in her eyes; and then she quickly crossed the room and threw herself at his feet.

“My father! My father! My father!”

The cry seemed to come from her heart, and I saw the old man’s face quiver and twitch; but he did not touch or embrace her.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"It is the dress he cannot bear," whispered Laxart distressfully to me, "it is as gall and wormwood to him to see his daughter go about in the garb of a man."

The Maid's face was raised in tender entreaty; she had hold of her father's hands by now. She was covering them with kisses.

"O my father, have you no word for me? Have you not yet forgiven your little Jeanne? I have but obeyed our Blessed Lord and His holy Saints. And see how they have helped and blessed and guided me! O my father, can you doubt that I was sent of them for this work? How then could I refuse to do it?"

Then the stern face seemed to melt with a repressed tenderness, and the father bent and touched the girl's brow with his lips. She uttered a little cry of joy, and would have flung herself into his arms; but he held her a little off, his hands upon her shoulders, and he looked into her face searchingly.

"That may have been well done, my daughter; I will not say, I will not judge.

But your task is now accomplished—your own lips have said it; and yet you still are to march with the King's army, I am told. You love better the clash of arms, the glory of victory, the companionship of soldiers and courtiers to the simple duties which await you at home, and the protection of your mother's love. That is not well. That is what no modest maiden should choose. I had hoped and believed that I should take my daughter home with me. But she has chosen otherwise. Do I not well to be angry?"

The Maid's face was buried in her hands. She would have buried it in her father's breast, but he would not have it so.

I could have wept tears myself at the sight of her sorrow. I saw how utterly impossible it would be to make this sturdy peasant understand the difficulty of the Maid's position, and the claims upon her great abilities, her mysterious influence upon the soldiers. The worthy prud'homme would look upon this as rather a dishonour and disgrace than a gift from Heaven.

The words I longed to speak died away upon my tongue. I felt that to speak them would be a waste of breath. Moreover, I was here as a spectator, not as a partaker in this scene. I held the document, signed and sealed by the King, which I was prepared to read to the visitors from Domremy. That was to be my share in this interview—not to interpose betwixt father and child.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

For a few moments there was deep silence in the room; then the Maid took her hands from her face, and she was calm and tranquil once again. She possessed herself of one of her father's reluctant hands.

"My father, I know that this thing is hard for you to understand. It may be that my brothers could explain it better than I, had you patience to hear them. But this I say, that I long with an unspeakable desire to return home with you, for I know that the path I must tread will darken about me, and that the end will be sad and bitter. And yet I may not choose for myself. My King commands. My country calls. I must needs listen to those voices. Oh, forgive me that I may not follow yours, nor the yearnings of mine own heart!"

The old man dropped her hand and turned away. He spoke no word; I think perchance his heart was touched by the tone of the Maid's voice, by the appealing look in her beautiful eyes. But he would not betray any sign of weakness. He turned away and leant his brow upon the hand with which he had grasped the high-carved ledge of the panelled shelf beside him. The Maid glanced at him, her lips quivering; and she spoke again in a brighter tone.

"And yet, my father, though you may not take me back with you, you shall not go away empty-handed. I have that to send home with you which shall, I trust, rejoice the hearts of all Domremy; and if you find it hard to forgive that which your child has been called upon to do, yet methinks there will be others to bless her name and pray for her, when they learn that which she has been able to accomplish."

Then she made a little sign to me, and I stepped forward with the parchment, signed and sealed, and held it towards the Maid's father. He turned to look at me, and his eyes widened in wonder and some uneasiness; for the sight of so great a deed filled him and his kinsman with a vague alarm.

“What is it?” he asked, turning full round, and I made answer:

“A deed signed by the King, exempting Domremy from all taxation, henceforward and for ever, by right of the great and notable services rendered to the realm by one born and brought up there—Jeanne d’Arc, now better known as THE MAID OF ORLEANS.”

The two men exchanged wondering glances, and over Laxart’s face there dawned a smile of intense joy and wonder.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"Nay, but this is a wonderful thing—a miracle—the like of which was never heard or known before! I pray you, noble knight, let me call hither those of our kinsfolk and acquaintance from Domremy as have accompanied us hither, that they may hear and understand this marvellous grace which hath been done us!"

I was glad enough that all should come and hear that which I read to them from the great document, explaining every phrase that was hard of comprehension. It was good to see how all faces glowed and kindled, and how the people crowded about the Maid with words of gratitude and blessing.

Only the father stood a little apart, sorrowful and stern. And yet I am sure that his heart, though grieved, was not altogether hardened against his child; for when at the last, with tears in her eyes (all other farewells being said), she knelt at his feet begging his blessing and forgiveness, he laid his hand upon her head for a moment, and let her embrace his knees with her arms.

"Go your way, my girl, if needs must be. Your mother will ever pray for you, and I trust the Lord whom you serve will not leave you, though His ways are too hard of understanding for me."

That was all she could win from him; but her heart was comforted, I think; for as she reached her lodging and turned at the door of her room to thank me in the gracious way she never forgot, for such poor services as I had rendered, she said in a soft and happy voice:

"I think that in his heart my father hath forgiven me!"

I had thought, when I began, to tell the whole tale of the Angelic Maid and all the things which she accomplished, and all that we who companied with her did and saw, both of success and of failure. But now my brain and my pen alike refuse the task. I must needs shorten it. I think my heart would

well nigh break a second time, if I were to seek to tell all that terrible tale which the world knows so well by now.

Ah me! Ah me!—what a world is this wherein we live, in which such things can be! I wake sometimes even yet in the night, a cold sweat upon my limbs, my heart beating to suffocation, a terror as of great darkness enfolding my spirit.

And is it wonderful that it should be so? Can any man pass through such experiences as mine, and not receive a wound which time can never wholly heal?

And though great things have of late been done, and the Pope and his Court have 150

swept away all such stain and taint as men sought to fasten upon the pure nature of the wonderful and miraculous Maid, we who lived through those awful days, and heard and saw the things which happened at that time, can never forget them, and (God pardon me if I sin in this) never forgive. There are men, some living still, and some passed to their last account, whom I would doom to the nethermost hell for their deeds in the days of which I must now write—though my words will be so few. And (with horror and shame be it spoken) many of these men were consecrated servants of the Holy Church, whose very office made the evil of their deeds to stand out in blacker hues.

It is easy for us to seek to fasten the blame of all upon the English, who in the end accomplished the hideous task; but at least the English were the foes against whom she had fought, and they had the right to hold her as an adversary whose death was necessary for their success; and had the English had their way she would have met her end quickly, and without all that long-drawn-out agony and mockery of a trial, every step and process of which was an outrage upon the laws of God and of man. No, it was Frenchmen who doomed her to this—Frenchmen and priests. The University of Paris, the officers of the Inquisition, the Bishops of the realm. These it was who formed that hideous Court, whose judgments have now been set aside with

contumely and loathing. These it was who after endless formalities, against which even some of themselves were forced in honour to protest, played so base and infamous a part—culminating in that so-called "Abjuration," as false as those who plotted for it—capped by their own infamous trick to render even that "Abjuration" null and void, that she might be given up into the hands of those who were thirsting for her life!

Oh, how can I write of it? How can I think of it? There be times yet when Bertrand, and Guy de Laval, and I, talking together of those days, feel our hearts swell, and the blood course wildly in our veins, and truly I do marvel sometimes how it was that we and others were held back from committing some desperate crime to revenge those horrid deeds, wrought by men who in blasphemous mockery called themselves the servants and consecrated priests of God.

But hold! I must not let my pen run away too fast with me! I am leaping to the end, before the end has come. But, as I say, I have no heart to write of all those weary months of wearing inactivity, wherein the spirit of the Maid chafed like that of a caged eagle, whilst the counsellors of the King—her bitter foes—had his ear, and held him back from following the course which her spirit and her knowledge alike advocated.

And yet we made none so bad a start.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

"We must march upon Paris next," spoke the Maid at the first Council of War held in Rheims after the coronation of the King; and La Hire and the soldiers applauded the bold resolve, whilst La Tremouille and other timid and treacherous spirits sought ever to hold him back.

I often thought of the words spoken by the Maid to those friends of hers from Domremy, when she bid them farewell on the evening of which I have just written.

"Are you not afraid, Jeanne," they asked, "of going into battle, of living so strange a life, of being the companion of the great men of the earth?"

And she, looking at them with those big grave eyes of hers, had made answer thus:

"I fear nothing but treachery."

I wondered when she spoke what treachery she was to meet with; but soon it became all too apparent. The King's ministers were treacherously negotiating with false Burgundy, some say with the Regent Bedford himself. They cared not to save France. They cared only to keep out of harm's way—to avoid all peril and danger, and to thwart the Maid, whose patriotism and lofty courage was such a foil to their pusillanimity and cowardice.

So that though she led us to the very walls of Paris, and would have taken the whole city without a doubt, had she been permitted, though the Duc d'Alencon, now her devoted adherent, went down upon his very knees to beg of the King to fear nothing, but trust all to her genius, her judgment; he could not prevail, and orders were sent forth to break down the bridge that she had built for the storming party to pass over, and that the army should fall back with their task undone!

Oh, the folly, the ingratitude, the baseness of it all! How well do I remember the face of the Maid, as she said:

"The King's word must be obeyed; but truly it will take him seven years—

ah, and twenty years now—to accomplish that which I would do for him in less than twenty days!"

Think of it—you who have seen what followed. Was Paris in the King's hands in less than seven years? Were the English driven from France in less than twenty?

She was wounded, too; and had been forcibly carried away from the field of battle; but it was against her own will. She would have fought through thick and thin, had the King's commands not prevailed; and even then she begged to be left with a band of soldiers at St. Denis.

"My voices tell me to remain here," she said; but alas! her voices were regarded no longer by the King, whose foolish head and cowardly heart were under other influences than that of the Maid, to whom he had promised so much such a short while since.

And so his word prevailed, and we were perforce obliged to retreat from those walls we had so confidently desired to storm. And there in the church of St.

Denis, where she had knelt so many hours in prayer and supplication, the Maid left her beautiful silver armour, which had so often flashed its radiant message of triumph to her soldiers, and with it that broken sword—broken outside the walls of Paris, and which no skill had sufficed to mend—which had been taken from St Catherine's Church in Fierbois.

It was not altogether an unwonted act for knights to deposit their arms in churches, though the custom is dying away, with so many other relics of chivalry; but there was something very strange and solemn in this act of the Maid. It was to us a significant sign of that which she saw before her. We dared not ask her wherefore she did it. Something in her sad, gentle face forbade us. But I felt the tears rising to my eyes as I watched her kneel long in prayer when the deed was done, and I heard stifled sobs arising from that end of the building where some women and children knelt. For the Maid was ever the friend of all such, and never a woman or child whom she approached, whether she were clad in peasant's homespun or in shining coat of mail, but gave her love and trust and friendship at sight.

Henceforth the Maid went clothed in a light suit of mail, such as any youthful knight might wear. She never spoke again of her fair white armour, or of the sword which had shivered in her hand, none save herself knew how or when.

Alas! for the days of glory which had gone before! Why did we keep her with the King's armies, when the monarch's ear was engrossed by adverse counsel, and his heart turned away from her who had been his Deliverer in the hour of his greatest need?

Methinks she would even now have returned home, but for the devotion of the soldiers and the persuasions of the Duc d'Alencon, and of some of the other 153

generals, amongst whom the foremost were Dunois and La Hire. These chafed equally with the Maid at the supine attitude of the King; and the Duke, his kinsman, spoke out boldly and fearlessly, warning him of the peril he was doing to his kingdom, and the wrong to the Maid who had served him so faithfully and well, and to whom he had made such fair promises.

But for the present all such entreaties or warnings fell upon deaf ears. The time for the King's awakening had not yet come.

Nevertheless, we had our days of glory still, under the banner of the Maid, when, after many months of idleness, the springtide again awoke the world, and she sallied forth strong in the assurance of victory, whilst fortress after fortress fell before her, as in the days of yore. Oh, how joyous were our hearts! Now did we believe truly that the tide had turned, and that we were marching on to victory.

But upon the Maid's face a shadow might often be seen to rest; and once or twice when I would ask her of it, she replied in a low, sorrowful voice:

"My year is well-nigh ended. Something looms before me. My voices have told me to be ready for what is coming. I fear me it will be my fate to fall into the hands of the foe!"

I would not believe it! Almost I was resolved to plunge mine own dagger into her heart sooner than she should fall into the hand of the pitiless English. But woe is me! I was not at her side that dreadful evening at Compiegne, when this terrible mishap befell. I had been stricken down in that horrid death trap, when, hemmed in between the ranks of the Burgundians and English, we found our retreat into the city cut off.

Was it treachery? Was it incapacity upon the part of the leaders of the garrison, or what was the reason that no rush from the city behind took the English in the rear, and effected the rescue of the Maid?

I know not—I have never known—all to me is black mystery. I was one of those to see the peril first, and with Bertrand and Guy de Laval beside me, to charge furiously upon the advancing foe, crying aloud to others to close round the Maid and bear her away into safety, whilst we engaged the enemy and gave them time.

That is all I know. All the rest vanishes in the mists. When these mists cleared away, Bertrand and I were in the home of Sir Guy, tended by his mother and grand-154

mother—both of whom had seen and loved well the wonderful Maid—and she was in a terrible prison, some said an iron cage, guarded by brutal English soldiers, and declared a witch or a sorceress, not fit to live, nor to die a soldier's death, but only to perish at the stake as an outcast from God and man.

Months had passed since the battle of Compiegne. Fever had had me fast in its grip all that while, and the news I heard on recovery brought it all back again. Bertrand and Guy were in little better case. We were like pale ghosts of our former selves during those winter months, when, hemmed in by snow, we could learn so little news from without, and could only eat out our hearts in rage and grief.

With the spring came the news of the trial at Rouen—the bitter hatred of Bishop Cauchon—the awful consummation he had vowed to bring about.

I know not whether it were folly to hope such a thing, but we three knights made instantly for the coast and crossed to England, to seek the ear of the young King there, and plead the cause of the Maid before him. I need not say how our mission failed. I care not to recall those sickening days of anxiety and hope deferred, and utter defeat at the last.

Heartbroken and desperate we returned; and made our way to Rouen. The whole city was in confusion. Need I say more? That very day, within an hour, the Maid, the Messenger from God, the Deliverer of the King, the Saviour of France, was to die by fire, to perish as a heretic. And the King whom she had saved had not lifted a hand to save her; the country she had delivered from a crushing disgrace, stood idly by to watch her perish thus!

Oh, the shame!—the treachery!—the horror! Let me not try to write of it.

The King has striven now to make amends; but I wonder how he feels sometimes when he sees the May sunshine streaming over the fair earth—over that realm which he now rules from sea to sea, when he thinks of the Maid who was led forth in that blaze of glory to meet her fiery doom.

O God of Heaven look down and judge! How shall I tell of the sight I beheld?

Suddenly I came upon it—mad with my grief, desperate with horror and despair. I saw the face of the Maid again! I saw her upraised eyes, and her hands clasped to her breast, holding thereto a rough wooden cross, whilst someone from below held high in the air a crucifix taken from some church and fastened upon a 155

long wand.

The pile on which she stood was so high—so high; they said it was done in mercy, that the rising clouds of smoke might choke her ere the flame touched her.

She was clad in a long white garment from head to foot; her hair had grown and fell about and back from her face in a soft cloud gilded by the sun's

rays. Her face was rapt—smiling—yes, I will swear it—smiling, as a child smiles up into the face of its father.

There was an awful hush throughout the wide place. Everything reeled and swam before me; but I saw that face—that serene and smiling face, wan and pale, but tranquil and glad and triumphant.

Then came the rush of smoke, and the glare of ruddy fire. A stifled cry, like one immense groan rose from below—above in the reek and blaze all was silent.

But from out that fire I saw—yes, and another saw it too (an English soldier, rushing to add a faggot to the pyre, a token of his hate to the Maid), and it so wrought upon him that he dropped his burden, fell upon his knees and was like to die of the fear—I saw a white dove rise from the smoke wreaths of that ghastly pile, hover a moment, just touched by the glare of the fire, and then dart heavenwards as upon eagle's wings.

Yes, I saw it. To the day of my death will I swear it. I saw what she had seen in vision long ago; and upon my heart there fell a strange sense of peace and calm. It had not hurt her—it had been as she once said. Her saints had been with her to the end. She had triumphed. All was well. Called of her Country, she had answered nobly to the call. Her Country had awarded her a fiery death; but in that fiery chariot she had ascended to the Lord, in whom she trusted, hereafter to receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

* * * * *

Although there was no cash in silken fob or broidered pocket, the Elect denied themselves no luxury. Bejewelled Fashion was sumptuously clad: ladies quarrelled and intrigued, danced and gambled—lords slept off the fumes of wine, and mopped the wounds begot of midnight brawl; then drank and fought again.

Money? No credit even. Trade was at a standstill, yet the court was uproariously gay.

Money and credit—sinews of pleasure as well as business—having flitted

from lively Paris, you might suppose that the wheels of Society would cease to turn—that the flower-decked car of gilded Juggernaut would come creeping to a standstill. Not yet. Impelled by the impulse of its own velocity, it continued to crush on awhile. Those who knew were numbed by the chill shadow of the inevitable, or rendered callous by the knowledge of their helplessness. Those who were deaf and blind groped blissfully on in their lighthearted ignorance. Selfish all, depraved most, the blue-blooded sang in merry chorus, *"Let us eat and drink that the worms may grow fat on us."* Not so the gaunt crowds whose blood was but mud and water. As their long-suffering ancestors had monotonously done, they groaned in unison, crying to God for death, as the only release from misery.

What if whole villages were decimated by famine? What if plague and starvation stalked through the towns? Lords and ladies cared not, for they were poised too high to see. Were the grovelling creatures slaves or insects? Slaves, for they delved patiently, with moans that were vain bleatings as of sheep; whereas outraged insects for the most part sting.

We all know that the first duty of serfs is to labour for their betters: their second, when the worn machinery is out of gear, to retire underground with promp-titude. How unseemly—nay, revolting, therefore, is their conduct when, weary of groaning and of teeth-gnashing, they belabour with arms and armor instead!

The scene we look upon is a tranquil and a pretty one, despite certain vague and ominous rumours which, intangible, permeate the air.

* * * * *

Never perhaps in modern times had a country sunk so low as France, when, in the year 1420, the treaty of Troyes was signed. Henry V. of England had made himself master of nearly the whole kingdom; and although the treaty only con-ferred the title of Regent of France on the English sovereign during

the lifetime of the imbecile Charles VI., Henry was assured in the near future of the full possession of the French throne, to the exclusion of the Dauphin. Henry received with the daughter of Charles VI. the Duchy of Normandy, besides the places conquered by Edward III. and his famous son; and of fourteen provinces left by Charles V. to his successor only three remained in the power of the French crown. The French Parlament assented to these hard conditions, and but one voice was raised in protest to the dismemberment of France; that solitary voice, a voice crying in a wilderness, was that of Charles the Dauphin—afterwards Charles VII. Henry V. had fondly imagined that by the treaty of Troyes and his marrage with a French princess the war, which had lasted over a century between the two countries, would 157

now cease, and that France would lie for ever at the foot of England. Indeed, up to Henry's death, at the end of August 1422, events seemed to justify such hopes; but after a score of years from Henry's death France had recovered almost the whole of her lost territory.

There is nothing in history more strange and yet more true than the story which has been told so often, but which never palls in its interest—that life of the maiden through whose instrumentality France regained her place among the nations. No poet's fancy has spun from out his imagination a more glorious tale, or pictured in glowing words an epic of heroic love and transcendent valour, to com-pete with the actual reality of the career of this simple village maiden of old France: she who, almost unassisted and alone, through her intense love of her native land and deep pity for the woes of her people, was enabled, when the day of action at length arrived, to triumph over unnumbered obstacles, and, in spite of all opposition, ridicule, and contumely, to fulfil her glorious mission.

Sainte-Beuve has written that, in his opinion, the way to honour the history of Joan of Arc is to tell the truth about her as simply as possible. This has been my object in the following pages.

On the border of Lorraine and Champagne, in the canton of the Barrois—

between the rivers Marne and Meuse—extended, at the time of which we are writing, a vast forest, called the Der. By the side of a little streamlet, which took its source from the river Meuse, and dividing it east by west, stands the village of Domremy. The southern portion, confined within its banks and watered by its stream, contained a little fortalice, with a score of cottages grouped around. These were situated in the county of Champagne, under the suzerainty of the Count de Bar.

The northern side of the village, containing the church, belonged to the Manor of Vaucouleurs. In this part of the village, in a cottage built between the church and the rivulet close by, Joan of Arc was born, on or about the 6th of January, 1412. The house which now exists on the site of her birthplace was built in 1481, but the little streamlet still takes its course at its foot. Michelet, in his account of the heroine, says the station in life of Joan's father was that of a labourer; later investigations have proved that he was what we should call a small farmer. In the course of the tral held for the rehabilitation of Joan of Arc's memory, which yields valuable and authentic information relating to her family as well as to her life and actions, it appears that the neighbours of the heroine deposed that her parents were well-to-do agriculturists, holding a small property besides this house at Domremy; they held about twenty acres of land, twelve of which were arable, 158

four meadow-land, and four for fuel. Besides this they had some two to three hundred francs kept safe in case of emergency, and the furniture goods and chattels of their modest home. The money thus kept in case of sudden trouble came in usefully when the family had to escape from the English to Neufchateau. All told, the fortune of the family of Joan attained an annual income of about two hundred pounds of our money, a not inconsiderable revenue at that time; and with it they were enabled to raise a family in comfort, and to give alms and hospitality to the poor, and wandering frars and other needy wayfarers, then so common in the land.

Two documents lately discovered prove Joan's father to have held a position of some importance at Domremy. In the one, dated 1423, he is styled '*doyen*'

(senior inhabitant) of the village, which gave him rank next to the Mayor. In the other, four years later, he fills a post which tallies with what is called in Scotland the Procurator-fiscal.

The name of the family was Arc, and much ink has been shed as to the origin of that name. By some it is derived from the village of d'Arc, in the Barrois, now in the department of the Haute Marne; and this hypothesis is as good as any other.

Jacques d'Arc had taken to wife one Isabeau Romee, from the village of Vouthon, near Domremy. Isabeau is said to have had some property in her native village. The family of Jacques d'Arc and Isabella or Isabeau consisted of five children: three sons, Jacquemin, Jean, and Pierre, and two daughters, the elder Catherine, the younger Jeanne, or Jennette, as she was generally called in her family, whose name was to go through the ages as one of the most glorious in any land.

Well favoured by nature was the birthplace of Joan of Arc, with its woods of chestnut and of oak, then in their primeval abundance. The vine of Greux, which was famous all over the country-side as far back as the fourteenth century, grew on the southern slopes of the hills about Joan's birthplace. Beneath these vineyards the fields were thickly clothed with rye and oats, and the meadow-lands washed by the waters of the Meuse were fragrant with hay that had no rival in the country. It was in these rich fields that, after the hay-making was over, the peasants let out their cattle to graze, the number of each man's kine corresponding with the number of fields which he owned and which he had reaped.

The little maid sometimes helped her father's labourers, and the idea has become general that Joan of Arc was a shepherdess; in reality, it was only an oc-159

casional occupation, and probably undertaken by Joan out of mere good-nature, seeing that her parents were well-to-do people. All that we gather of Joan's early years proves her nature to have been a compound of love and goodness. Every trait recorded of the little maid's life at home which has

come down to us reveals a mixture of amability, unselfishness, and charity. From her earliest years she loved to help the weak and poor: she was known, when there was no room for the weary wayfarer to pass the night in her parents' house, to give up her bed to them, and to sleep on the floor, by the hearth.

She loved her mother tenderly, and in her tral she bore witness before men to the good influence that she had derived from that parent. Isabeau d'Arc appears to have been a devout woman, and to have brought up her children to love work and religion. Joan loved to sit by her mother's side for the hour together, spinning, and doubtless listening to the stories of wars with the hereditary enemy. When she could be of use, Joan was ever ready to lend a hand to help her father or brothers in the rougher labours of coach-house, stable, or farmyard, to keep watch over the flocks as they browsed by the river-side along the meadow-lands.

Joan had not the defect of so many excellent but tedious women, who love talk for the mere sake of talking: she seems to have been reserved; but, as she proved later on, she was never at a loss for a word in season, and with a few words could speak volumes. From her childhood she showed an intense and ever-increasing devotion to things holy; her delight in prayer became almost a passion.

She never wearied of visiting the churches in and about her native village, and she passed many an hour in a kind of rapt trance before the crucifixes and saintly images in these churches. Every morning saw her at her accustomed place at the early celebration of her Lord's Sacrifice; and if in the afternoon the evening bells sounded across the fields, she would kneel devoutly, and commune in her heart with her divine Master and adored saints. She loved above all things these evening bells, and, when it seemed to her the ringer grew negligent, would bribe him with some little gift—the worked wool from one of her sheep or some other trifle—

to remind him in the future to be more instant in his office. That this little trait in Joan is true, we have the testimony of the bell-ringer himself to attest.

This devotion to her religious duties had not the effect of making Joan less of a companion to her fellow-villagers. She could not have been so much beloved by them as she was had she held herself aloof from them: on the contrary, Joan enjoyed to play with the lads and village lasses; and we hear of her swiftness of foot in the race, of her gracefulness in the village dance, either by the stream or around an old oak-tree in the forest, which was said to be the favourite haunt of 160

the fairies.

Often in the midst of these sports Joan would break away from her companions, and enter some church or chapel, where she placed garlands of flowers around statues of her beloved saints.

Thus passed away the early years of the maiden's gentle life, among her native fields, with nothing especally to distinguish her from her companions beyond her goodness and piety. A great change, however, was near at hand. The first of those mysterious and supernatural events which played so all-important a part in the life of our heroine occurred in the summer of 1425, when Joan was in her thirteenth year. In her tral at Rouen, on being asked by her judges what was the first manifestation of these visions, she answered that the first indication of what she always called 'My voices' was that of St. Michel. It is not a little remarkable that this vision of St. Michel, the patron saint of the French army, should have taken place in the summer of 1425, at the time of a double defeat by land and sea of the enemy of France, and when the Holy Mount in Normandy, crowned by the chapel guarded by St. Michel, was once again in the hands of the French. At the same time, Joan of Arc experienced some of the hardships of war when the country around Domremy was overrun by the enemy; and the little household of the Arcs had to fly for shelter to the neighbouring village of Chateauneuf, in Lorraine.

I will pass somewhat rapidly over the visions, or rather revelations—for, whatever doubts one may hold as to such heavenly messengers appearing literally on this earth, no man can honestly doubt that Joan believed as firmly in these unearthly visitants coming from Heaven direct as she did in the existence of herself or of her parents. On the subject of these voices and

visions no one has written with more sense than a distinguished prelate who was a contemporary of the heroine's—namely, Thomas Basin, Bishop of Lisieux, who, in a work relating to Joan of Arc, writes thus:—

'As regards her mission, and as regards the apparitions and revelations that she affirmed having had, we leave to every one the liberty to believe as he pleases, to reject or to hold, according to his point of view or way of thinking.

What is important regarding these visions is the fact that Joan had herself no shadow of a doubt regarding their reality, and it was their effect upon her, and not her natural inclination, which impelled her to leave her parents and her home to undertake great perils and to endure great hardships, and, as it proved, a terrible death. It was these visions and voices, and they alone, which made her believe that she would succeed, if she obeyed them, in saving her country and in replacing her king on his throne. It was these visions and voices which finally enabled 161

her to do those marvellous deeds, and accomplish what appeared to all the world the impossible; these voices and visions will ever be connected with Joan of Arc, and with her deathless fame and glory.'

From the year 1425 till 1428, the apparitions and voices were heard and seen more or less frequently.

It is the year 1427: all that remains to Charles of his kingdom north of the Loire, with the exception of Tournay, are a pitiful half-dozen places. Among these is Vaucouleurs, near Domremy. They are defended by a body of men under the command of a knight, Robert de Baudricourt, who is about to play an important part in the history of Joan.

In one of her visions the maid was told to seek this knight, that through his help she might be brought to the French Court; for the voices had told her she might find the King and tell him her message, by which she should deliver the land from the English, and restore him to his throne. There had not been wanting legends and prophecies upon the country-side which may

have impressed Joan, and helped her to believe that it was her mission to deliver France. One of the prophecies was to the effect that a maiden from the borders of Lorraine should save France, that this maiden would appear from a place near an oak forest. This seemed to point directly to our heroine. The old oak-tree haunted by the fairies, the neighbouring country of Lorraine, were all in help of the tradition. Since the betrayal of her husband's country by the wife of Charles VI., another saying had been spread abroad throughout all that remained of that small portion of France still held by the French King—namely, that although France would be lost by a woman, a maiden should save it. Any hope to the people in those distressful days was eagerly seized on; and although the first prophecy dated from the mythical times of Merlin, it stirred the people, especally when, later on, Joan of Arc appeared among them, and her story became known.

These prophecies appear to have struck deeply into Joan's soul; they, and her voices aiding, made her believe she was the maiden by whom her country would be delivered from the presence of the enemy. But how was she to make her parents understand that it was their child who was appointed by Heaven to fulfil this great deliverance? Her father seems to have been a somewhat harsh, at any rate a practical, parent. When told of her intention to join the army, he said he would rather throw her into the river than allow her to do so. An attempt was made by her parents to induce her to marry. They tried their best, but Joan would none of it; and bringing the case before the lawyers at Toul, where she proved that she had never thought of marrying a youth whom her parents required her to wed, 162

she gained her cause and her freedom.

In order to take the first step in her mission, Joan felt it necessary to rely on some one outside her immedate family. A distant relation of her mother's, one Durand Laxart, who with his wife lived in a little village then named Burey-le-Petit (now called Burey-en-Vaux), near Vaucouleurs, was the relation in whose care she placed her fate. With him and his wife Joan remained eight days; and it might have been then that the plan was arranged to hold an interview with Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs, in order to see whether that knight would interest himself in Joan's mission.

The interview took place about the middle of the month of May (1428), and nothing could have been less propitious. A soldier named Bertrand de Poulangy, who was one of the garrison of Vaucouleurs, was an eye-witness of the meeting.

He accompanied Joan of Arc later on to Chinon, and left a record of the almost brutal manner with which Baudricourt received the Maid. From this soldier's narrative we possess one of the rare glimpses which have come down to us of the appearance of the heroine: not indeed a description of what would be of such intense interest as to make known to us the appearance and features of her face; but he describes her dress, which was that then worn by the better-to-do agricultural class of Lorraine peasant women, made of rough red serge, the cap such as is still worn by the peasantry of her native place.

It is much to be regretted that no portrait of Joan of Arc exists either in sculpture or painting. A life-size bronze statue which portrayed the Maid kneeling on one side of a crucifix, with Charles VII. opposite, forming part of a group near the old bridge of Orleans, was destroyed by the Huguenots; and all the portraits of Joan painted in oils are spurious. None are earlier than the sixteenth century, and all are mere imaginary daubs. In most of these Joan figures in a hat and feathers, of the style worn in the Court of Francis I. From various contemporary notices, it appears that her hair was dark in colour, as in Bastien Lepage's celebrated picture, which supplies as good an idea of what Joan may have been as any pictured representation of her form and face. Would that the frescoes which Montaigne describes as being painted on the front of the house upon the site of which Joan was born could have come down to us. They might have given some conception of her appearance. Montaigne saw those frescoes on his way to Italy, and says that all the front of the house was painted with representations of her deeds, but even in his day they were much injured.

When Joan at length stood before the knight of Vaucouleurs, she told him boldly that she had come to him by God's command, and that she was destined to 163

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give the King victory over the English. She even said that she was assured that early in the following March this would be accomplished, and that the Dauphin would then be crowned at Rheims, for all these things had been promised to her through her Lord.

'And who is he?' asked de Baudricourt.

'He is the King of Heaven,' she answered.

The knight treated Joan's words with derision, and Joan herself with insults; and thus ended the first of their interviews.

It was only in the season of Lent of the next year (March 1427) that Joan again sought the aid of de Baudricourt. On the plea of attending her cousin Laxart's wife's confinement, Joan returned to Burey-le-Petit. She left Domremy without bidding her parents farewell; but it has been recorded by one of her friends, named Mengeth, a neighbour of the d'Arcs, that she told this woman of her intention of going to Vaucouleurs, and recommended her to God's keeping, as if she felt that she would not see her again. At Burey-le-Petit Joan remained between the end of January until her departure for Chinon, on the 23rd of February; and before taking final leave she asked and received her parents' pardon for her abrupt departure from them.

While with the Laxarts, news reached Vaucouleurs that the English had commenced the siege of Orleans. This intelligence brought matters to a crisis, for with the loss of Orleans the whole of what remained to the French King must fall into the hands of the enemy, and France felt her last hour of independence had come.

Joan determined on again seeking an interview with Robert de Baudricourt, and this second meeting between her and the knight, which took place six months after the first, had far happier results. As M. Simeon Luce has pointed out in his history of 'Jeanne d'Arc at Domremy,' the situation both of Charles VI. and of the knight of Vaucouleurs was far different in 1429 to what it had been when Joan first saw de Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs in the previous year. The most important stronghold held by the French in their ever-lessening territory was in utmost danger of falling into the grasp of the English; while de Baudricourt was anxiously waiting to hear whether his

protector, the Duc de Bar, whom Bedford had summoned to enter into a treaty with the English, would not be prevailed upon to do so. If he consented, this would make the knight's tenure of Vaucouleurs impracticable. It was probably owing to this state of affairs that, on her second interview with the knight 164

of Vaucouleurs, Joan of Arc was favourably received by him. Since the first visit to de Baudricourt by the Maid of Domremy, her name had become familar to many of the people in and about Vaucouleurs. An officer named Jean de Metz has left some record of his meeting at this time with Joan; for he was afterwards examined among other witnesses at the time of the Maid's rehabilitation in 1456. De Metz describes the Maid as being clothed in a dress of coarse red serge, the same as she wore on her first visit to Vaucouleurs. When he questioned her as to what she expected to gain by coming again to Vaucouleurs, she answered that she had returned to induce Robert de Baudricourt to conduct her to the King; but that on her first visit he was deaf to her entreaties and prayers. But, she added, she was still determined to appear before Charles, even if she had to go to him all the way on her knees.

'For I alone,' she added, 'and no other person, whether he be King, or Duke, or daughter of the King of Scots' (alluding to the future wife of Charles VII.'s son, Louis XI.—Margaret of Scotland) 'can recover the kingdom of France.'

As far as her own wishes were concerned, she said she would prefer to return to her home, and to spin again by the side of her beloved mother; for, she added: 'I am not made to follow the career of a soldier; but I must go and carry out this my calling, for my Lord has appointed me to do so.'

'And who,' asked de Metz, 'is your Lord?'

'My Lord,' answered the Maid, 'is God Himself.'

The enthusasm of Joan seems to have at once gained the soldier's heart. He took her by the hand, and swore that God willing he would accompany her

to the King. When asked how soon she would be ready to start, she said that she was ready. ‘Better to-day than to-morrow, and better to-morrow than later on.’

During her second visit to Vaucouleurs, Joan remained with the same friends as on her former visit; they appear to have been an honest couple, of the name of Le Royer. One day while Joan was helping in the domestic work of her hosts, and seated by the side of Catherine Le Royer, Robert de Baudricourt suddenly entered the room, accompanied by a priest, one Jean Fournier, in full canonicals. It appeared that the knight had conceived the brillant idea of finding out, through the assistance of the holy man, whether Joan was under the influence of good or evil spirits, before allowing her to go to the King’s Court.

As may be imagined, Joan received the priest with all respect, kneeling 165

before him; and the good father was soon able to reassure de Baudricourt that the evil spirits had no part or parcel in the heart of the maid who received him with so much humility.

For three weeks Joan was left in suspense at Vaucouleurs, and probably it was not until a messenger had been sent to Chinon and had returned with a favourable answer, that at length de Baudricourt gave a somewhat unwilling consent to Joan’s leaving Vaucouleurs on her mission to Chinon. During those weary weeks of anxious waiting, Joan’s hostess bore witness in after days to the manner in which the time was passed: of how she would help Catherine in her spinning and other homely work, but, as when at home, her chief delight was to attend the Church services, and she would often remain to confession, after the early communion in the church. The chapel in which she worshipped was not the parochal church of Vaucouleurs, but was attached to the castle, and it still exists. In that castle chapel, and in a subterranean crypt beneath the Collegate Church of Notre Dame de Vaucouleurs, Joan passed much of her time. Seven and twenty years after these events, one Jean le Fumeux, at that time a chorister of the chapel, a lad of eleven, bore witness, at the tral in which the memory of Joan was vindicated, to having often seen her kneeling before an image of the Virgin.

This image, a battered and rude one, still exists. Nothing less artistic can be imagined; but no one, be his religious views what they may, be his abhorrence of Mariolatry as strong as that of a Calvinist, if he have a grain of sympathy in his nature for what is glorious in patriotism and sublime in devotion, can look on that battered and broken figure without a feeling deeper than one of ordinary curiosity.

A short time before leaving Vaucouleurs, Joan made a visit into Lorraine—

a visit which proved how early her fame had spread abroad. The then reigning Duke of that province, Charles II. of Lorraine, an aged and superstitious prince, had heard of the mystic Maid of Domremy, and he had expressed his wish to see her, probably thinking that she might afford him relief from the infirmities from which he suffered. Whatever the reason may have been, he sent her an urgent request to visit him, a message with which Joan at once complied.

Accompanied by Jean de Metz, Joan went to Toul, and thence with her cousin, Durand Laxart, she proceeded to Nancy. Little is known of her deeds while there. She visited Duke Charles, and gave him some advice as to how he should regain his character more than his health, over which she said she had no control.

The old Duke appears to have been rather a reprobate, but whether he profited by Joan's advice does not appear.

Possibly this rather vague visit of the Maid's to Nancy was undertaken as a

kind of test as to how she would comport herself among dukes and princes. That she showed most perfect modesty of bearing under somewhat difficult circumstances seems to have struck those who were with her at Nancy. She also showed practical sagacity; for she advised Duke Charles to give active support to the French King, and persuaded him to allow his son-in-law, young RenE of Anjou, Duke of Bar, to enter the ranks of the King's army, and even to allow him to accompany her to the Court at Chinon. By this she

bound the more than lukewarm Duke of Lorraine to exert all his influence on the side of King Charles.

Before leaving Nancy on her return to Vaucouleurs, Joan visited a famous shrine, not far from the capital, dedicated to St. Nicolas, after which she hastened back to Vaucouleurs to make ready for an immedate start for Chinon.

Joan's equipment for her journey to Chinon was subscribed for by the people of Vaucouleurs; for among the common folk there, as wherever she was known, her popularity was great. She seems to have won in every instance the hearts of the good simple peasantry, the poorer classes in general, called by a saintly King of France the 'common people of our Lord,' who believed in her long before others of the higher classes and the patricans were persuaded to put any faith in her. To the peasantry Joan was already the maiden pointed out in the old prophecy then known all over France, which said that the country would be first lost by a woman and then recovered by a maiden hailing from Lorraine. The former was believed to be the Queen-mother, who had sided with the English; Joan, the Maid out of Lorraine who should save France, and by whose arm the English would be driven out of the country.

Clad in a semi-male attire, composed of a tight-fitting doublet of dark cloth and tunic reaching to the knees, high leggings and spurred boots, with a black cap on her head, and a hauberk, the Maid was armed with lance and sword, the latter the gift of de Baudricourt. Her good friends of Vaucouleurs had also subscribed for a horse. Thus completely equipped, she prepared for war, ready for her eventful voyage. Her escort consisted of a knight named Colet de Vienne, accompanied by his squire, one Richard l'Archer, two men-at-arms from Vaucouleurs, and the two knights Bertrand de Poulangy and Jean de Metz—eight men in all, well armed and well mounted, and thoroughly prepared to defend their charge should the occasion arise. Nor were precautions and means of repelling an attack unnecessary, for at this time the country around Vaucouleurs was infested by roving bands of soldiers belonging to the Anglo-Burgundan party.

Especally dangerous was that stretch of country lying between Vaucouleurs and Joinville, the first of the many stages on the way to Chinon. Although

the knights and men of the small expedition were not without apprehension, Joan seems to 167

have shown no sign of fear: calm and cheerful, she said that, being under the protection of Heaven, they had nothing to fear, for that no evil could befall her.

There still exists the narrow gate of the old castle of Vaucouleurs through which that little band rode out into the night; hard by is the small subterranean chapel, now under repair, where Joan had passed so many hours of her weary weeks of waiting at Vaucouleurs. The old gate is still called the French Gate, as it was in the days of the Maid.

It was the evening of the 23rd of February, 1429, that the little band rode away into the open country on their perilous journey. Joan, besides adopting a military attire, had trimmed her dark hair close, as it was then the fashion of knights to do—cut round above the ears. Even this harmless act was later brought as an accusation against her. Joan was then in her seventeenth year, and, although nothing but tradition has reached us of her looks and outward form, it is not difficult to imagine her as she rides out of that old gate, a comely maid, with a frank, brave countenance, lit up by the flame of an intense enthusasm for her country and people. There can be no doubt that by her companions in arms—rough soldiers though most of them were—she was held in veneration; they bore testimony to their feelings by a kind of adoration for one who seemed indeed to them more than mortal. Wherever Joan appeared, this feeling of veneration spread rapidly through the length and breadth of the land; and the people were wont to speak of the future saviour of France, not by the name of Joan the Maid, or Joan of Arc, but as the Angelic One— *'l'Angelique.'*

Among the crowd who gathered to see Joan depart was de Baudricourt, who then made amends for his rudeness and churlish behaviour on her first visit by presenting her with his own sword, and bidding her heartily god-speed.

' *Advienne que pourra!* ' was his parting salute.

The journey between Vaucouleurs and Chinon occupied eleven days. Not only was the danger of attack from the English and Burgundan soldiers a great and a constant one, but the winter, which had been exceptionally wet, had flooded all the rivers. Five of these had to be crossed—namely, the Marne, the Aube, the Seine, the Yonne, and the Loire: and most of the bridges and fords of these rivers were strictly guarded by the enemy. The little band, for greater security, mostly travelled during the night. Their first halt was made at the Monastery of Saint-Urbain-les-Joinville. The Celibat of this monastery was named Arnoult d'Aunoy, and was a relative of de Baudricourt. After leaving that shelter they had to camp out in the open country.

A MISSION FROM GOD

Joan's chief anxiety was that she might be able to attend Mass every day. 'If we are able to attend the service of the Church, all will be well,' she said to her escort. The soldiers only twice allowed her the opportunity of doing so, on one occasion in the principal church of the town of Auxerre.

They crossed the Loire at Gien; and at that place, in the church dedicated to one of Joan's specal saints—St. Catherine, for whom she held a personal adoration—she thrice attended Mass.

When the little band entered Touraine, they were out of danger, and here the news of the approach of the Maid spread like wildfire over the country-side.

Even the besieged burghers of Orleans learned that the time of their delivery from the English was at hand.

Perhaps it was when passing through Fierbois that Joan may have been told of the existence in its church of the sword which so conspicuously figured in her later story, and was believed to have been miraculously revealed to her.

A letter was despatched from Fierbois to Charles at Chinon, announcing the Maid's approach, and craving an audience. At length, on the 6th of March, Joan of Arc arrived beneath the long stretch of castle walls of the splendid old Castle of Chinon.

That imposing ruin on the banks of the river Vienne is even in its present abandoned state one of the grandest piles of medieval building in the whole of France. Crowning the rich vale of Touraine, with the river winding below, and reflecting its castle towers in the still water, this time-honoured home of our Plantagenet kings has been not inaptly compared to Windsor. Beneath the castle walls and the river, nestles the quaint old town, in which are medieval houses once inhabited by the court and followers of the French and English kings.

When Joan arrived at Chinon, Charles's affairs were in a very perilous state.

The yet uncrowned King of France regarded the chances of being able to hold his own in France as highly problematical. He had doubts as to his legitimacy. Finan-cally, so low were his affairs that even the turnspits in the palace were clamouring for their unpaid wages. The unfortunate monarch had already sold his jewels and precious trinkets. Even his clothes showed signs of poverty and patching, and to such a state of penury was he reduced that his bootmaker, finding that the King was unable to pay him the price of a new pair of boots, and not trusting the royal credit, refused to leave the new boots, and Charles had to wear out his old shoe-leather. All that remained in the way of money in the royal chest consisted of four 169

gold 'Ecus.' To such a pitch of distress had the poor King, who was contemptu-ously called by the English the King of Bourges, sunken.

Now that Orleans was in daily peril of falling into the hands of the English, and with Paris and Rouen in their hold, the wretched sovereign had serious thoughts of leaving his ever-narrowing territory and taking refuge either in Spain or in Scotland. Up to this time in his life Charles had shown little strength of character. His existence was passed among a set of idle courtiers. He had placed himself and his broken fortunes in the hands of the ambitious La Tremoille, whose object it was that the King should be a mere cipher in his hands, and who lulled him into a false security by encouraging him to continue a listless career of self-indulgence in his various palaces and pleasure castles on the banks of the Loire.

Charles had, indeed, become a mere tool in the hands of this powerful minister.

The historan Quicherat has summed up George de la Tremoille's character as an avaricious courtier, false and despotic, with sufficient talent to make a name and a fortune by being a traitor to every side. That such a man did not see Joan of Arc's arrival with a favourable eye is not a matter of surprise, and La Tremoille seems early to have done his utmost to undermine the Maid's influence with his sovereign. From the day she arrived at Chinon, if

not even before her arrival there—if we may trust one story—an ambush was arranged by Tremoille to cut her off with her escort. That plot failed, but her capture at Compagne may be indirectly traced to La Tremoille's machinations.

Those who have visited Chinon will recall the ancient and picturesque street, named La Haute Rue Saint Maurice, which runs beneath and parallel with the castle walls and the Vienne. Local tradition pointed out till very recently, in this old street, the stone well on the side of which the Maid of Domremy placed her foot on her arrival in the town. This ancient well stone has recently been removed by the Municipality of Chinon, but fortunately the 'Margelle' (to use the native term) has come into reverent hands, and the stone, with its deeply dented border, remind-ing one of the artistic wells in Venice, is religiously preserved.

Of Chinon it has been said:

Chynon, petit ville, Grande renom.

Chinon, small town, great reknown.

Its renown dates back from the early days of our Plantagenets, when they lived in the old fortress above its dwellings: how Henry III. died of a broken heart, and the fame of Rabelais, will ever be assocated with the ancient castle and town.

A MISSION FROM GOD

Still, the deathless interest of Chinon is owing to the residence of the Maid of Domremy—as one has a better right to call her than of Orleans—in those early days of her short career, in its burgh and castle. In or near the street La Haute Rue Saint Maurice, hard by a square which now bears the name of the heroine, Joan of Arc arrived at noon on Sunday, the 6th of March.

It would be interesting to know in which of the old gabled houses Joan resided during the two days before she was admitted to enter the castle. Local tradition reports that she dwelt with a good housewife (*'chez une bonne femme'*). According to a contemporary plan of Chinon, dated 1430, a house which belonged to a family named La Barre was where she lodged; and although the actual house of the La Barres cannot be identified, there are many houses in the street of Saint Maurice old enough to have witnessed the advent of the Maid on that memorable Sunday in the month of March 1430. Few French towns are so rich in the domestic architecture of the better kind dating from the early part of the fifteenth century as that of Chinon; and now that Rouen, Orleans, and Poitiers have been so terribly modernised, a journey to Chinon well repays the trouble. Little imagination is required to picture the street with its crowd of courtiers and Court hangers-on, upon their way to and from the castle above; so mercifully have time and that far greater destroyer of things of yore dealt with this old thoroughfare.

Two days elapsed before Joan was admitted to the presence of the King. A council had been summoned in the castle to determine whether the Maid should be received by the monarch. The testimony of the knights who had accompanied the Maid from Vaucouleurs carried the day in her favour.

While waiting to see the King, we have from Joan's own lips a description of how her time was passed. 'I was constantly at prayers in order that God should send the King a sign. I was lodging with a good woman when that sign was given him, and then I was summoned to the King.'

The church in which she passed her time in prayer was doubtless that of Saint Maurice, close by the place at which she lodged. It owed its origin to Henry II. of England; it is a rare and beautiful little building of good Norman architecture, but much defaced by modern restoration. Its age is marked by the depth at which its pavement stands, the ground rising many feet above its present level.

A relable account of Joan of Arc's interview with King Charles has come down to us, as have so many other facts in her life's history, through the witnesses examined at the time of the heroine's rehabilitation. Foremost among these is the testimony of a priest named Pasquerel, who was soon to become Joan's almoner, 171

and to accompany her in her warfare. He tells how, when Joan was on her road to enter the castle, a soldier used some coarse language as he saw the young Maid pass by—some rude remark which the fellow qualified with an oath. Turning to him, the Maid rebuked him for blaspheming, and added that he had denied his God at the very moment in which he would be summoned before his Judge, for that within an hour he would appear before the heavenly throne. The soldier was drowned within the hour. At least such is the tale as told by Priest Pasquerel.

The castle was shrouded in outer darkness, but brillantly lit within, as Joan entered its gates. The King's Chamberlain, the Comte de Vendume, received the Maid at the entrance of the royal apartments, and ushered her into the great gallery, of which fragments still exist—a blasted fireplace, and sufficient remains of the original stone-work to prove that this hall was the principal apartment in the palace. Flambeaux and torches glowed from the roof and from the sides of this hall, and here the Court had assembled, half amused, half serious, as to the arrival of the peasant girl, about whom there had been so much strange gossip stirring. Now the grass grows in wild luxurance over the pavement, and the ivy clings to the old walls of that noble room, in which, perhaps, the most noteworthy of all recorded meetings between king and subject then took place. A score of torches held by pages lit the sides of the chamber. Before these were ranged the knights and ladies, the latter clothed in the fantastically rich costume of that time,

with high erections on their heads, from which floated long festoons of cloth, and glit-tering with the emblems of their families on their storied robes. The King, in order to test the divination of the Maid, had purposely clad himself in common garb, and had withdrawn himself behind his more brillantly attired courtiers.

Ascending the flight of eighteen steps which led into the hall, and following Vendume, Joan passed across the threshold of the hall, and, without a moment's hesitation singling out the King at the end of the gallery, walked to within a few paces of him, and falling on her knees before him—'the length of a lance,' as one of the spectators recorded—said, 'God give you good life, noble King!' ('_Dieu vous donne bonne vie, gentil Roi_').

'But,' said Charles, 'I am not the King. This,' pointing to one of his courtiers,

'is the King.'

Joan, however, was not to be hoodwinked, and, finding that in spite of his subterfuges he was known, Charles acknowledged his identity, and entered at once with Joan on the subject of her mission.

It appears, from all the accounts which have come to us of this interview,

that Charles was at first somewhat loth to take Joan and her mission seriously. He appears to have treated the Maid as a mere visionary; but after an interview which the King gave her apart from the crowded gallery, when she is supposed to have revealed to him a secret known only to himself, his whole manner changed, and from that moment Joan exercised a strong influence over the man, all-vacillating as was his character. It has never been known what words actually passed in this private interview between the pair, but the subject probably was connected with a doubt that had long tortured the mind of the King—namely, whether he were legitimately the heir to the late King's throne. At any rate the impression Joan had produced on the King was, after that conversation, a favourable one, and Charles

commanded that, instead of returning to her lodging in the town, Joan should be lodged in the castle.

The tower which she occupied still exists—one of the large circular towers on the third line of the fortifications. A gloomy-looking cryptal room on the ground floor was probably the one occupied by Joan. It goes by the name of Belier's Tower—a knight whose wife, Anne de Maille, bore a reputation for great goodness among the people of the Court. Close to Belier's Tower is a chapel within another part of the castle grounds, but the church which in those days stood hard by Joan's tower has long since disappeared—its site is now a mass of wild folage.

While Joan was at Chinon, there arrived, from his three years' imprisonment in England, the young Duke of Anjou. Of all those who were attached to the Court and related to the French sovereign, this young Prince was the most sympathetic to Joan of Arc. He seems to have fulfilled the character of some hero of romance more than any of the French princes of that time, and Joan at once found in him a chivalrous ally and a firm friend. That she admired him we cannot doubt, and she loved to call him her knight.

Hurrying to Chinon, having heard of the Maid of Domremy's arrival, he found Joan with the King. Her enthusasm was contagious with the young Prince, who declared how eagerly he would help her in her enterprise.

'The more there are of the blood royal of France to help in our enterprise the better,' answered Joan.

Many obstacles had still to be met before the King accorded liberty of action to the Maid. La TremoÔlle and others of his stamp threw all the difficulties they could suggest in the way of Joan of Arc's expedition to deliver Orleans: these men preferred their easy life at Chinon to the arbitrament of battle. In vain Joan sought the King and pressed him to come to a decision: one day he said he would 173

consent to her progress, and the following he refused to give his consent. He listened to the Maid, but also to the courtiers, priests, and lawyers, and

among so many counsellors he could come to no determination.

Joan during these days trained herself to the vocation which her career compelled her to follow. We hear of her on one occasion surprising the King and the Court by the dexterity with which she rode and tilted with a lance. From the young Duke of Alencon she received the gift of a horse; and the King carried out on a large scale what de Baudricourt had done on a small one, by making her a gift of arms and accoutrements. Before, however, deciding to entrust the fate of hostilities into the hands of the Maid, it was decided that the advice and counsel of the prelates assembled at Poitiers should be taken.

It was in the Great Hall of that town that the French Parlament held its conferences. The moment was critical, for should the decision of these churchmen be favourable to Joan, then Charles could no longer have any scruples in making use of her abilities, and of profiting by her influence.

It was, therefore, determined that Joan should be examined by the Parlament and clergy assembled at Poitiers. The King in person accompanied the Maid to the Parlament. The majestic hall, which still calls forth the admiration of all trav-ellers at Poitiers, is little changed in its appearance since the time of that memorable event. It is one of the noblest specimens of domestic architecture in France: its graceful pillars and arched roof, and immense fireplace, remain as they were in the early days of the fifteenth century.

Of the proceedings of that examination unfortunately no complete report exists. Within a tower connected with the Parlament Hall is still pointed out a little chamber, said to have been occupied by the Maid while undergoing this, the first of her judical and clerical examinations. But later investigations point to her having been lodged in a house within the town belonging to the family of the Parla-mentary Advocate-General, MaItre Jean Rabuteau.

It must have been a solemn moment for Joan when summoned for the first time into the presence of the Court of bishops, judges, and lawyers, whom Charles had gathered together to examine her on her visions and on her mission. The orders had been sent out by the King and the Archbishop of Rheims; Gerard Machot, the Bishop of Castres and the King's confessor;

Simon Bonnet, afterwards Bishop of Senlis; and the Bishops of Macquelonne and of Poitiers. Among the lesser dignitaries of the Church was present a Dominican monk, named Sequier, whose account of the proceedings, and the notes kept by Gobert Thibault, an equerry of 174

the King, are the only records of the examination extant. The scantiness of these accounts is all the more to be regretted, inasmuch as Joan frequently referred to the questions made to her, and her answers, at this tral at Poitiers, during her tral at Rouen; and they would probably have thrown much light on the obscure passages of her early years, for at Poitiers she had not to guard against hostile inquisition, and, doubtless, gave her questioners a full and free record of her past life.

The first conference between these prelates, lawyers, and Joan lasted two hours. At first they appeared to doubt the Maid, but her frank and straightforward answers to all the questions put her impressed them with the truth of her character. They were, according to the old chronicles, 'grandement ebahis comme une ce simple bergAre jeune fille pouvait ainsi repondre.'

One of her examiners, Jean Lombard by name, a professor of theology from the University of Paris, in asking Joan what had induced her to visit the King, was told she had been encouraged so to do by 'her voices'—those voices which had taught her the great pity felt by her for the land of France; that although at first she had hesitated to obey them, they became ever more urgent, and commanded her to go.

'And, Joan,' then asked a doctor of theology named Willam Aymeri, 'why do you require soldiers, if you tell us that it is God's will that the English shall be driven out of France? If that is the case, then there is no need of soldiers, for surely, if it be God's will that the enemy should fly the country, go they must!'

To which Joan answered: 'The soldiers will do the fighting, and God will give the victory!'

Sequier, whose account of the proceedings has come down to us, then asked Joan in what language the Saints addressed her.

'In a better one than yours,' she answered.

Now Brother Sequier, although a doctor of theology, had a strong and disagreeable accent which he had brought from his native town of Limoges, and, doubtless, the other clerks and priests tittered not a little at Joan's answer. Sequier appears to have been somewhat irritated, and sharply asked Joan whether she believed in God.

'Better than you do,' was the reply; but Sequier, who is described as a *'bien aigre homme,'* was not yet satisfied, and returned to the charge. Like the Phari-175

sees, he wished for a sign, and he declared that he for one could not believe in the sacred mission of the Maid, did she not show them all a sign, nor without such a sign could he advise the King to place any one in peril, merely on the strength of Joan's declaration and word.

To this Joan said that she had not come to Poitiers to show signs, but she added:—

'Let me go to Orleans, and there you will be able to judge by the signs I shall show wherefore I have been sent on this mission. Let the force of soldiers with me be as small as you choose; but to Orleans I must go!'

For three weeks did these conferences last. Nothing was neglected to discover every detail regarding Joan's life: of her childhood, of her family and her friends. And one of the Council visited Domremy to ferret out all the details that could be got at. Needless to say, all that he heard only redounded to the Maid's credit; nothing transpired which was not honourable to the Maid's character and way of life, and in keeping with the testimony Jean de Metz and Poulangy had given the King at Chinon.

One day she said to one of the Council, Pierre de Versailles, 'I believe you have come to put questions to me, and although I know not A or B, what I

do know is that I am sent by the King of Heaven to raise the siege of Orleans, and to conduct the King to Rheims, in order that he shall be there anointed and crowned.'

On another occasion she addressed the following words in a letter which John Erault took down from her dictation—to write she knew not—to the English commanders before Orleans: 'In the name of the King of Heaven I command you, Suffolk [spelt in the missive Suffort], Scales [Classidas], and Pole [La Poule], to return to England.'

One sees by the above missive that the French spelling of English names was about as correct in the fifteenth as it is in the nineteenth century.

What stirred the curiosity of Joan's examiners was to try and discover whether her reported visions and her voices were from Heaven or not. This was the crucal question over which these churchmen and lawyers puzzled their brains during those three weeks of the blithe spring-tide at Poitiers. How were they to arrive at a certain knowledge regarding those mystic portents? All the armoury of theological knowledge accumulated by the doctors of the Church was made use of; but this availed less than the simple answers of Joan in bringing conviction to 176

these puzzled pundits that her call was a heavenly one. When they produced piles of theological books and parchments, Joan simply said: 'God's books are to me more than all these.'

When at length it was offically notified that the Parlament approved and sanctioned the mission of the Maid, and that nothing against her had appeared which could in any way detract from the faith she professed to follow out her mission of deliverance, the rejoicing in the good town of Poitiers was extreme. The glad news spread rapidly over the country, and fluttered the hearts of the besieged within the walls of Orleans. The cry was, 'When will the angelic one arrive?' The brave Dunois—Bastard of Orleans—in command of the French in that city, had ere this sent two knights, Villars and Jamet de Tilloy, to hear all details about the Maid, whose advent was so eagerly looked forward to. These messengers of Dunois had seen and

spoken with Joan, and on their return to Orleans Dunois allowed them to tell the citizens their impressions of the Maid. Those people at Orleans were now as enthusastic about the deliverance as the inhabitants at Poitiers, who had seen her daily for three weeks in their midst. All who had been admitted to her presence left her with tears of joy and devotion; her simple and modest behaviour, blended with her splendid enthusasm, won every heart. Her manner and modesty, and the gay brightness of her answers, had also won the suffrage of the priests and lawyers, and the military were as much delighted as surprised at her good sense when the talk fell on subjects relating to their trade.

It was on or about the 20th of April 1429 that Joan of Arc left Poitiers and proceeded to Tours. The King had now appointed a military establishment to accompany her; and her two younger brothers, John and Peter, had joined her. The faithful John de Metz and Bertrand de Poulangy were also at her side. The King had selected as her esquire John d'Aulon; besides this she was followed by two noble pages, Louis de Contes and Raimond. There were also some men-at-arms and a couple of heralds. A priest accompanied the little band, Brother John Pasquerel, who was also Joan's almoner. The King had furthermore made Joan a gift of a complete suit of armour, and the royal purse had armed her retainers.

During her stay at Poitiers Joan prepared her standard, on which were emblazoned the lilies of France, in gold on a white ground. On one side of the standard was a painting representing the Almighty seated in the heavens, in one hand bearing a globe, flanked by two kneeling angels, each holding a fleur-delis. Besides this standard, which Joan greatly prized, she had had a smaller banner made, with the Annuncation painted on it. This standard was trangular in form; and, in addition to those mentioned, she had a banneret on which was represented the Crucifixion. These three flags or pennons were all symbolic of the Maid's mis-177

sion: the large one was to be used on the field of battle and for general command; the smaller, to rally, in case of need, her followers around her; and probably she herself bore one of the smaller pennons. The names 'Jesu' and 'Mara' were inscribed in large golden letters on all the flags.

The national royal standard of France till this period had been a dark blue, and it is not unlikely that the awe and veneration which these white flags of the Maid, with their sacred pictures on them, was the reason of the later French kings adopting the white ground as their characteristic colour on military banners.

Joan never made use of her sword, and bore one of the smaller banners into the fight. She declared she would never use her sword, although she attached a deep importance to it.

'My banner,' she declared, 'I love forty times as much as my sword!'

And yet the sword which she obtained from the altar at Fierbois was in her eyes a sacred weapon.

It will be now necessary to go back in our story to the commencement of the siege by the English of the town of Orleans, in order to understand the work which Joan of Arc had promised to accomplish. Orleans was the place of the utmost importance; not merely as being the second city in France, but as forming the 'tÍte du pont' for the passage of the river Loire. The French knew that were it to fall into the hands of the English the whole of France would soon become subject to the enemy.

The town was strongly fortified; huge towers of immense thickness, and three stories in height, surrounded by deep and wide moats, encircled the city.

The only bridge then in existence was also strongly defended with towers, called

'Les Tournelles,' while at the end of the town side of the bridge were large

'bastilles,' powerful fortresses which dated from the year 1417, when Henry V.

threatened Orleans after his triumphal march through Normandy. In 1421 the Orleanists defied the victor of Agincourt: again they were in the agony of a desperate defence against their invaders, ready to sustain all the horrors of a siege.

Equally keen and determined were the English leaders to take Orleans, which they rightly considered as the key of what remained unconquered to them in France. Both countries looked anxiously on as the siege progressed. Salisbury commanded the English; he had been up to this point successful in taking all the places of importance in the neighbourhood of Orleans, and that portion of the 178

valley of the Loire was commanded by his forces, both above and below Orleans.

On the approach of the enemy, the inhabitants of Orleans turned out to strengthen the outer fortifications, and to place cannon and catapults on the walls and ramparts. The priests on this occasion worked as hard as the other citizens, and even the women and children helped with a will.

Besides Dunois, who commanded the besieged garrison, was Raoul de Gaucourt, who had defended Harfleur in 1415; he had but recently returned from imprisonment in England, and was burning to avenge his captivity. La Hire, Xaintrailles, Coulant, Coaraze, and Armagnac were among the defenders of Orleans. Many Gascons belonging to the Marshal-Saint SEvAre and soldiers from Brittany helped to swell the forces of the besieged.

It was on the 12th day of October (1428) that Salisbury crossed the Loire and established his besieging force at the village of Portereau, in front of the strongly defended bridge. In the meanwhile the besieged had razed the houses and the convent of St. Augustin, in order to prevent the enemy from entrenching themselves so near the city gates. Salisbury, however, threw up fortifications on the site of St. Augustin's, and placed a battery of guns opposite to the bridge and its 'bastilles,' whence he was able to bombard the town with huge stones. The English also placed mines below the bridge and the fortresses of the Tournelles.

On the 21st, an assault was made on the bridge and its defences, which was vigorously repulsed; the whole population were in arms, and manned the

walls; the women fought by the side of their husbands and brothers. After a severe fight of four hours, the besiegers were forced to withdraw.

The Tournelles were now mined and counter-mined, and were soon found to be untenable. The besieged then abandoned this fortification, and retired further back towards the centre of the bridge, which, as well as its approaches, was defended by towers. Part of the bridge on the side near the English was blown up, and a drawbridge, which could be raised or lowered at pleasure, was thrown across the open space.

Salisbury was satisfied with the result of that day's fighting, for he knew that, once he had the command of the northern side of the tower, he could take it when necessary from that quarter. What he aimed at for the present was to prevent all communication between the town and the south of France. Holding the bridge, he could prevent relief from coming to the city, and when the moment arrived he would be able to throw his men with certain success upon it from the 179

northern side.

The evening of the day in which he had made so successful an attack, Salisbury mounted into the Tournelles in order to inspect thence the city which lay beneath him. While gazing on it, a stray cannon shot struck him on the face; he was carried, mortally wounded, from the place. That fatal shot was said to have been fired by a lad, who, finding a loaded cannon on the ramparts, had discharged it. For the English, it was the deadliest shot of the whole war.

Readers of Shakespeare will remember that, in the first part of _Henry VI._, the Master Gunner (no doubt that very 'MaItre Jean' whose fame was great in the besieged town) and his boy are introduced on the scene, and that the boy fires the shot which proved fatal both to Salisbury and Sir Thomas Gargrave. The prominent place given to this French Master Gunner in the English play shows what a high reputation MaItre Jean must have had, even among the English, at the siege.

Salisbury's death, occurring a few days after he received the wound, caused the siege to languish. Glansdale succeeded Salisbury in the command; but it was not until the doughty Talbot and Lord Scales appeared on the scene that siege operations recommenced with vigour.

The great pounding match then began again; the huge stone shot of the English, which weighed one hundred and sixty-four livres, came tumbling about the heads of the besieged, to which cannonade the French promptly replied by a heavy fire. They had a kind of bomb, of which they were not a little proud, where-from they fired iron shot of one hundred and twenty livres in weight. The Master of Gunners of Shakespeare's play, whose name was John de MonsteschAre, made also extraordinary practice with his culverin; and he could pick off marked men in the Tournelles, as, for the misfortune of the English, had been proved in the case of Salisbury. At times Master John would sham dead, and, just as the English were congratulating themselves on his demise, would reappear, and again use his culverin with deadly effect.

On the last day but one of the year (1428), the English had been reinforced, and were now commanded by Willam de la Pole, Earl, and afterwards Duke of Suffolk, under whose command acted Suffolk's brother, John de la Pole, Lord Scales, and Lancelot de Lisle. In order to maintain touch with his troops posted at the Tournelles, Suffolk threw up flanking batteries on the northern side of the town.

To Suffolk's already large force Sir John Fastolfe brought a force of twelve hundred men, in the month of January (1429).

A MISSION FROM GOD

The number of troops mustered by the besieged and besiegers was as follows:—

On the side of the English, there were quartered at the Tournelles five hundred men, under the command of Glansdale; three hundred under Talbot; twelve hundred with Fastolfe. Including those who had come with Suffolk at the commencement of the siege, the English force amounted to four thousand five hundred men.

On the side of the besieged, excluding the armed citizens, who were from three to four thousand strong, was a garrison numbering between six and seven hundred men; also some thousand soldiers had been thrown into the city between the middle of October 1428 and the January following.

Both in strength of position, and as regards the number of their troops, the French had the advantage. The comparative weakness of the English force—which, all told, could only count about four thousand men to carry on the siege—is to be accounted for by the garrisons which were left in the conquered places over the north and south of the country.

The siege was weakly conducted during the winter—a series of skirmishes from the bastilles or towers thrown up by the besiegers led to little result on either side; and it was not till the month of February that a decisive engagement took place.

Near Rouvray a battle was fought, which is known by the singular appellation of the Battle of the Herrings, from the circumstance that, at that Lenten season, a huge convoy of fish was being taken from the coast to Paris. In the fight, the fish-laden barrels were overthrown, and their contents scattered over the field; whence the name of the Battle of the Herrings. During this engagement, in which the French were defeated, fell, on the side of the French, two noble Scots—John Stuart, the Constable of Scotland, and his brother Willam.

After this action, the position of the besieged in Orleans became more perilous, and the citizens, despairing of help coming to them from Charles, were inclined to call in aid from the Duke of Burgundy. The east, north, and west of the city were covered by the bastilles or huge towers which the besiegers had thrown up, and from which they could bombard the place; and the pressure on the devoted city waxed ever stronger. By the month of April, Orleans was girdled by a chain of fortresses, from which the cannonade was incessant. The English gave names of French towns to these huge towers which threatened Orleans on every 181

side; one they named Paris, another Rouen, and one other they called London.

The thirty thousand men, women, and children within the city walls were now beginning to suffer from the horrors of a long siege. In the town disturbances broke out, and the cry of treachery was heard—that sure precursor of the fears of the strong that the hardships of the siege would undermine the patriotism of their weaker citizens. But when things seemed at their worst, succour was near at hand.

During those winter months the Queen-mother, who had warmly interested herself in Joan of Arc's mission, had, in the Castle of Blois, been collecting troops and securing the services of some notable officers, including the Duke of Alencon.

Towards the end of April Joan arrived at Blois from Poitiers, accompanied by the Archbishop of Rheims, Regnault de Chartres. On the 27th of April she left Blois on her first warlike expedition.

No certain account of the numbers of troops which accompanied the Maid has been kept. Monstrelet gives the numbers at seven thousand; but Joan, during her tral, asserted that she had between ten and twelve thousand men committed to her charge by the King. Joan's historan, M. Wallon, points out that this may be an incorrect entry made in the interest of the English at the tral, as they naturally would wish the relieving force to appear as large as possible. It has even been placed as low as three thousand. Among the

officers who accompanied the Maid was a Gascon knight, named La Hire, half freebooter, half condottiere, a brave and reckless soldier, of whom it is recorded that, before making a raid, he would offer up the following prayer: —

'I pray my God to do for La Hire what La Hire would do for Him, if He were Captain and La Hire was God.'

From having been a mighty swearer, owing to Joan of Arc's influence La Hire broke off this habit, but, in order to give him some scope for venting his temper, Joan allowed him to swear by his stick.

These are but trival details: still, they are of interest as showing what influence a simple village maiden like Joan was able to exert on those who, from their position and habits of life, might have been thought to be the last to tolerate such interference. So changed, it is said, had this rough warrior, La Hire, and many of his fellow-soldiers become in their habits while with the Maid, that they were happy to be able to kneel by the side of the sainted maiden and partake in her Lord's Sacrament of the Eucharist; and then to confess themselves to her good father confessor, Peton de Xaintrailles, the Marshal de Boussac, and the Seigneur de 182

A MISSION FROM GOD

Rais.

Joan had the following letter despatched to the Duke of Bedford:—

'In the name of Jesus and Mary—You, King of England; and you, Duke of Bedford [Bethfort], who call yourself Regent of France; you, Willam de la Pole; you, Earl of Suffolk; you, John Lord Talbot [Thalebot]; and you, Thomas Lord Scales, who call yourselves Lieutenants of the said Bedford, in the name of the King of Heaven, render the keys of all the good towns which you have taken and violated in France, to the Maid sent hither by the King of Heaven. She is ready to make peace if you will consent to return and to pay for what you have taken. And all of you, soldiers, and archers, and men-at-arms, now before Orleans, return to your country, in God's name. If this is not done, King of England, I, as a leader in war, whenever I

shall meet with your people in France, will oblige them to go whether they be willing or not; and if they go not, they will perish; but if they will depart I will pardon them. I have come from the King of Heaven to drive you out [_bouter_]

of France. And do not imagine that you will ever permanently hold France, for the true heir, King Charles, shall possess it, for it is God's wish that it should belong to him. And this has been revealed to him by the Maid, who will enter Paris. If you will not obey, we shall make such a stir [_ferons un si gros hahaye_] as hath not happened these thousand years in France. The Maid and her soldiers will have the victory. Therefore the Maid is willing that you, Duke of Bedford, should not destroy yourself.'

And Joan finishes this strange effusion by proposing to Bedford that they should combine in making a holy war for Christanity!

This letter, written 'in the name of the Maid,' was dated on a Tuesday in Holy Week. The address ran thus: 'To the Duke of Bedford, so called Regent of the Kingdom of France, or to his Lieutenants, now before the town of Orleans.'

Doubtless the reference to the deed of arms which, once again at peace together, might be accomplished by the combined English and French armies, was an idea which seems to have floated in Joan's enthusastic imagination, that the day might come when the two foremost nations in Christendom would fight together for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre.

As might be expected, this letter was received by the English with gibes and jeers, which was pardonable; but what was not so was the bad treatment of the messenger who had brought it to the English camp. He was kept prisoner, and, if some rather doubtful French writers of the day are to be believed, it was 183

seriously debated whether or not he should be burnt. Let us trust this is but an invention of the enemy.

Joan, before leaving Blois, insisted on the dismissal of all camp followers—

such bad baggage was certainly well left behind, and could not have followed an army led by one who, night and morning, had an altar erected, around which her hallowed flags were placed, and where the Maid, and those willing, took the Sacrament at the head of the army. It must have been a striking sight during that spring-time—that army, led by a maiden all clad in white armour, and mounted on a black charger, surrounded by a brillant band of knights, riding along the pleasant fields of Touraine, then in their first livery of brillant green. And a striking sight it must have been, when, at the close of the long day's march, the tents were pitched and the altar raised, the officating priests grouped about it and the sacred pictured standards waving above, while the solemn chant was raised, and the soldiers knelt around.

One can well think how ready were those soldiers to follow Joan wherever she would lead them, and it is not improbable that such a crusade as she dreamt of, had it been possible, in which the two nations, so closely connected by religious feeling, and so closely united by position, but so long enemies owing to the rapacity and greed of their kings, might have again placed the cross on the battlements of the Holy City, under the leadership of her whom her countrymen rightly called 'The Angelic.'

Joan rode out of Blois bearing her pennon in her hand, and as she rode she chanted the 'Veni Creator.' The sacred strain was taken up by those who followed, and thus passed the Maid forth on her first great deed of deliverance.

During the whole of the first night Joan remained, as was her custom when she had no women about her, in her armour.

It was the Maid's wish to enter Orleans from the northern side, but the officers with her thought this would be a great imprudence, and followed the opposite bank of the river. Passing through Beaugency and Meung, they went on by Saint Die, Saint Laurent, and Clery, without meeting with any attack from the enemy who occupied these places. On arriving at a place called Olivet, they were within the neighbourhood of the beleaguered city.

Below them rose the English bastille towers; beyond, the walls, towers, and steeples of Orleans.

Joan had hoped that the city could have been entered without further difficulty; she now found that not only the river lay between her and the town, but that 184

the English were in force on all sides. She wished that the nearest of these bastilles, at Saint Jean le Blanc, should be stormed, and the river forded there; but this scheme was judged by her companions-in-arms to be too perilous, and Joan had again to comply with the opinion of the officers.

Riding to the eastwards, and skirting the river some four miles below the town, she and her knights forded it at a spot where some low long islands, or

'eyots' as we call them on the Thames, lay in this part of the Loire. On one of these, called l'Isle aux Bourdons, the provisions and stores for the beleaguered city were shipped and transhipped, and carried down to Orleans when the wind lay in that quarter.

It was at Reuilly that Dunois met the Maid, still chafing from her thwarted plan of attacking the English in their stronghold at Saint Jean le Blanc, and she appears to have shown him her displeasure. While this interview took place the wind changed, and the provision boats, which, owing to the wind being contrary, had not been able to make the islands, were now enabled to leave the city. They soon arrived, were laden with provisions, corn, and even cattle embarked on them, and, when thus provisioned, returned to Orleans by the canal on the left bank of the Loire, and successfully arrived at the city end of the broken bridge, whence the provisions and live stock were passed into the town.

The river was too much in flood to allow of the army being taken across, nor could a bridge of boats be made, owing to the height of the waters. Joan, however, was determined to enter Orleans, flood or no flood, for she knew what the moral effect of her appearing to the townspeople would be. Accompanied by Dunois, La Hire, and some two hundred lances, just after

darkness had hidden her movements from the enemy, she left Reuilly and entered the city.

Preceded by a great banner, the Maid of Orleans, as she may now be called, with Dunois by her side, and followed by her knights and men-at-arms, rode slowly through the streets, filled with a crowd almost delirious in its joy at welcoming within its walls its long-looked-for Deliverer. The people clung to her, kissing her knees and feet, and, according to the old chroniclers, behaved as if God Himself had appeared among them. So eager was the throng to approach her, that in the press one of her standards was set on fire by a flambeau. After returning thanks for the delivery of her countrymen in the cathedral, Joan was made welcome at the house of the treasurer of the imprisoned Duke of Orleans. This citizen's name was James Boucher; and here she lodged, with her brothers, and the two faithful knights who had accompanied her during her journey from Vaucouleurs to Chinon.

A MISSION FROM GOD

A vaulted room in this house is still shown, which purports to have been that occupied by the Maid of Orleans. If it is the same building it has been much modernised, although a beautiful specimen of the domestic Gothic of the early part of the fifteenth century, known as the house of Agnes Sorel, remains much in the condition that it must have been in during the famous year of deliverance, 1429.

Although Orleans, by the action of Joan of Arc, had been succoured for the time, the enemy was still at its gates, and Joan's mission was but half accomplished.

The aspect of affairs since the 29th of April was, however, greatly changed in favour of the French, and the _rUles_ of besieged and besiegers changed. Joan's arrival had infused a fresh spirit of enthusasm and patriotism into the citizens, and the English were no longer feared. We have Dunois's authority for the fact that whereas, up to that time, two hundred English could put eight hundred French to the rout, now five hundred French soldiers were prepared to meet the entire English army.

On the 13th of April, hostilities had recommenced. Four hundred men, commanded by Florent d'Illiers, made a sortie against the English near the trenches at Saint Pouair, driving them into their quarters. But the success was not followed up, and appears to have been undertaken without Joan of Arc's advice. To the heralds that she sent into the English camp only jeers and taunts were returned; and already the threat of burning her when caught was made use of. Joan was, however, not to be deterred by menaces and insults from doing all she could to prevent unnecessary loss of life. On one occasion she rode out half-way across the bridge, to where there stood a crucifix called La Belle Croix, within speaking distance of the English in the Tournelles. Thence she summoned Glansdale and his men to surrender, promising that their lives should be spared. They answered with derisive shouts and villainous abuse. Still commanding her patience, which was only equalled by her courage, and before returning to the town, she told them

that, in spite of their boasting, the time was near at hand when they would be driven forth, and that their leader would never see England again. That they feared the Maid was evident, in spite of the insults with which they greeted her; at any rate, no attempt was made to attack her: even when almost alone, she came close to their fortifications.

Meanwhile Dunois left for Blois to bring up the bulk of the army, while Joan remained in Orleans, encouraging its inhabitants by her confidence, faith, and courage. The people, writes the chronicler of the siege, were never sated with the sight of the Maid: 'ils ne pouvaient saouler de la voir,' he graphically says.

A second ineffectual effort was made by Joan, this time at a place called the 186

Croix Morin, to negotate with the English, she again promising them quarter if they would capitulate, but, as might be expected, with no better result than before.

On the 2nd of May, followed by a vast throng, Joan of Arc rode out along the enemy's forts, and after closely inspecting their defences returned to vespers at the Church of Sainte-Croix. Certainly among the people there was no want of belief in, and enthusastic devotion to, the Maid; but she had already enemies among the entourage of the King. We have already alluded to TremoÔlle's feelings with regard to her and her mission. A still more formidable enemy was the Chancellor of France, the Archbishop of Rheims, Regnault de Chartres; he and TremoÔlle worked in concert to undermine all the prestige which Joan's success in revictualling Orleans had caused at Court. The historan Quicherat, whose work on Joan of Arc is by far the most complete and relable, considers this man to have been an astute politican, without any moral strength or courage. When with Joan of Arc, he seems to have shown firmness and even enthusasm in her mission, but he sank into the _rUle_ of a poltroon when her influence was withdrawn. Instead of hastening the despatch of the reinforcements from Blois to Orleans, he threw delay in the way; he seems to have hesitated in letting these troops join those under the Maid, for fear that were she to gain a thorough success his

influence at Court would be weakened. When Joan fell into the hands of her foes, the Archbishop had the incredible baseness publicly to show his pleasure, declaring that her capture by the enemy was a proof of Divine justice.

It was not till the 4th of May, and not until Dunois had ridden in hot haste from Blois, that at length the aid, so long and eagerly expected, arrived.

Joan rode to meet the succouring army some two miles out of the city, bearing her flag, accompanied by La Hire and others of her knights. After a joyful meeting, they turned, riding right through the enemy's lines and along the fortified bastilles occupied by the English. Whether it was fear, or superstition mixed with fear, not a man from the English side stirred, although the English outnum-bered the French. It seemed that a terror had seized on the enemy as they saw her, whom they called the Sorceress, ride by in her white panoply, bearing aloft her mystic banner.

The English had now run short of supplies, and eagerly awaited the arrival of Sir John Fastolfe, who was on his road to Orleans. Joan of Arc felt uneasy, lest she might not be able to cut off Fastolfe and his supplies, and she playfully threatened Dunois with his instant execution if he failed to tell her of the moment he learnt of his approach. Her anxiety was well founded, for the attack commenced 187

before she had been apprised of it. She had lain down for a short repose one afternoon, when she heard the sounds of a cannonade. She instantly ordered her squire d'Aulon to arm her, as she must immedately attack the English; but whether those at the Tournelles, or the advancing force under Fastolfe, she could not yet tell.

While arming, a great clamour rang through the town: the enemy were said to be at hand, and the battle already engaged. Hastily throwing on her armour, with the assistance of her hostess and d'Aulon, she dashed off on her horse, and had only time to snatch her flag, as it was handed to her from a window, so impetuous was she to enter the fray.

As she galloped down the street the sparks flew from the stones, through the High Street and past the cathedral, and out by the Burgundy Gate. The action had already been raging, and the wounded were being borne back into the town.

It was the first time the Maid came face to face with such grisly sights—the agony of the wounded, the blood and gaping wounds. Her squire, d'Aulon, who has left some record of that day, says how much she grieved over the wounded as they were carried past her; her beloved countrymen bleeding and dying affected her deeply. As her page writes, she said she could not see French blood without her hair rising with horror at the sight.

Before she reached the field the day had been lost and won, the English were in full retreat, and the battle now lay around the bastilles of Saint Loup. About a mile to the north-east of the town were the Englishmen; strongly entrenched, the place commanded that portion of the river which Talbot had garrisoned with some three hundred of his best troops. Joan now gave instructions that no aid should reach this portion of the English defences from the adjacent bastilles. All around the fight raged, and Joan was soon in the hottest of the engagement, encouraging her soldiers, her flag in her hand. Dismounting, she stood on the edge of the earthwork, beyond which the English were at bay.

Talbot, seeing his men hard pressed, gave orders for a sortie to be made from one of the other towers, named Paris, and thus cause a diversion, while another force attacked the French in their rear. This expedient, however, failed, for a fresh force appeared at this juncture from Orleans, led by Boussac and De Graville, who beat back the attack of the English. The English troops within the fortress of Saint Loup were slain or taken. Joan herself rescued some of these, and placed them under her protection; caring for them in the house she was staying in.

A MISSION FROM GOD

At the close of the day, on returning into the town, Joan told the people that they might count on being free from the enemy in five days' time, and that by that time not a single Englishman would remain before Orleans. No wonder that the joy-bells rang out in victorious clamour during all that night in May, the eve of the Ascension.

On the following day no hostilities occurred. Joan again had a letter sent to the English, summoning them as before to surrender and to quit their forts; she said this was the third and the last time that she could give them a chance of escaping with their lives. On this occasion she made use of a new way of communicating with the foe; she tied the letter to an arrow, which was discharged into the English lines. No answer was received in return.

It was now determined that the next attack against the English should be made from the left bank of the river, where they were strongly fortified at the Bastille des Augustins, a little further down the Loire than the Tournelles. On the opposite side this fortress communicated with the Boulevard of Saint PrivE, as well as with the strong fortress of Saint Laurent, near which a small island, which exists no longer, called the Isle of Charlemagne, kept open their connections on both sides of the Loire. To the east, on the same side of the river, a fortress, that of Saint Jean le Blanc, which had been abandoned on the approach of Joan, had since been reoccupied by the English. It was at this spot that the next and all-important attack was directed to be made.

The French forces crossed the river over an island called Saint Aignan. The distance was so narrow between the river bank on the town side and this island, that a couple of boats moored together served as a bridge. When Saint Jean le Blanc was reached, it was found deserted by the English, Glansdale having left it in order to concentrate his forces at the Tournelles. Joan led the attack. At first the French fought badly; they had been seized by a panic, believing that a strong force of the enemy were coming down on

them from Saint PrivE. Rallying her men, Joan threw herself on the English, and drove them back into the Augustins.

She was now eagerly followed by the soldiers.

The first barricade was carried in a hand-to-hand fight, and soon the French flags waved above the fortress so long held by the enemy. The few English able to escape retired to the Tournelles. Eager to carry on the success of the attack, and to prevent delay, Joan ordered that the fort of the Augustins be fired, with the booty it contained.

The victors, who only numbered three thousand strong, captured six hun-

dred prisoners, one third were slain of the English, and two hundred French prisoners recovered.

This was the second occasion on which the Maid had carried all before her.

The day was closing, and the attack on the Tournelles had to be deferred for that evening. That night Joan of Arc said to her almoner: 'Rise early to-morrow, for we shall have a hard day's work before us. Keep close to me, for I shall have much to do, more than I have ever had to do yet. I shall be wounded; my blood will flow!'

This prophetic speech of the Maid is among the most curious facts relating to her life; for not only did she, during her tral at Rouen, tell her judges that she had been aware that she would be wounded on that day, and even knew the position beforehand of the wound, but that she had known it would occur a long time before, and had told the King about it. A letter is extant in the Public Library at Brussels, written on the 22nd of April (1429), by the Sire de Rotslaer, dated from Lyons, in which Joan's prophecy regarding her wound is mentioned. This letter was written fifteen days before the date (7th of May) of the engagement when that event occurred. A facsimile of the passage in this letter referring to Joan's prophecy appears in the illustrated edition of M. Wallon's Life of Joan of Arc.

Very early on the following day, Saturday, the 7th of May, it appears that an attempt was made to prevent the Maid from starting for the field, as, at a council held on the evening before by the officers, it had been considered more prudent, before renewing the attack on the English fortifications, to await fresh reinforcements from the King. When this was reported to Joan, she said: 'You have taken your counsel, and I have received mine,' and at break of day she was ready, armed and prepared for the attack. Before starting, her host wished her to eat some fish, an 'alose,' which had just been brought to him. 'Keep it,' said Joan with a smile, 'till the evening, and I will bring with me a "Godon" who will, eat his share of it.' This sobriquet of 'Godon' was evidently the generic term for the English, as far back as the early years of the fifteenth century, and may have been centuries before the French designation for our countrymen.

Thus, full of spirits and with a brave heart, the Maid rode off to meet the foe.

When she reached the gate called Burgundy, she found it closed by order of De Gaucourt, Grand Master of the King's Household, who had done so at the instigation of those officers who wished the attack on the English deferred until fresh reinforcements arrived. But the Maid was not to be beaten and kept back even by barred gates.

‘You are doing a bad deed,’ she indignantly said to those about the gate,

‘and whether you wish it or not, my soldiers shall pass.’

The gate was opened, and Joan, followed by her men, galloped to where some troops who had been left in possession of the fortifications taken on the previous day were stationed. The attack on the Tournelles commenced as soon as Joan arrived—it was then between six and seven in the morning. Meanwhile Dunois, La Hire, and the principal forces from the town came up. A desperate struggle ensued; both sides knew that, whatever the result, that day would decide the fate of Orleans—even that of the war.

The French were fighting under the eyes of their countrymen, who manned the walls, and under the guidance of a leader they already regarded as more than human—and never had they fought so well, during that long and bloody century of warfare, as they did on that day.

The English, on the other hand, knew that if they were beaten out of the Tournelles their defeat would be complete, and they too fought with desperate courage.

Down into the ditches rushed the French, and up the sides of the glacis; scaling-ladders were placed against the walls, to which the men upon them clung like a swarm of bees. The defenders met them with showers of arrows and shot, and hurled them back with lance and hatchets. Constantly beaten back, they returned as constantly to the charge. For six hours this fight lasted, and weariness and discouragement fell on the French. Joan, who had been all these hours in the thick of the engagement, seeing her men were losing heart, redoubled her efforts; and, helping to raise a scaling-ladder, she placed it against the parapet of one of the towers. While thus engaged she was struck by a bolt from a cross-bow, between her shoulder and neck. The wound was a severe one; she fell, and was carried out of the press. Although she suffered acutely, she had the nerve to draw the arrow from the wound.

She refused to have the wound ‘charmed,’ as some of those standing around her suggested, saying she would sooner die than do anything that might be displeasing in the sight of Heaven. A compress, steeped in oil, was then applied, and it staunched the bleeding. She was faint and unnerved, and, as she seemed to feel her death was near, made her confession to her priest.

Still the Tournelles held out in spite of these repeated attacks, and Dunois, as the shadows lengthened, was on the point of calling back his forces and sounding the retreat. Joan, in the meanwhile, had been withdrawn from the fighting, 191

and placed in a meadow at some distance from the carnage; but when she heard that the troops were about to be recalled from their attack on the Tournelles, she seemed to forget her wound, and, making her way to Dunois, implored him not to give up the fight. She assured him that she was certain they would even yet be victorious. In a few stirring sentences she rallied the men to fresh efforts, and told them that now or never would they conquer; the English, she declared, could not hold out much longer. Mounting her horse, and with flag unfurled, she again led the van; to those near her she said, ‘Watch my standard; when it reaches the walls the place will be ours.’

The struggle that ensued was fierce and decisive. Inspired by the valour of Joan, the French, who appeared as fresh as before her wound, stormed the bastions and towers of the Tournelles with tremendous energy. Reinforcements had meanwhile arrived from the town, and these attacked the Tournelles in the rear.

Passing over the broken arches of the bridge by means of ladders thrown across the masonry, the first man to reach the other bank was a knight of Rhodes, Nicolas de Giresme. Attacked from two sides, the English still held the Tournelles with bull-dog tenacity; but the sight of the witch and sorceress, as they considered Joan, and who they thought had met with a mortal hurt, leading the soldiers with unabated courage, caused a panic to spread through their ranks; and when a sudden shout of victory proclaimed that the white and golden banner had at length struck the walls of the fortress, the doom of the Tournelles had arrived.

Clear above the din of battle rang out the triumphant voice of the Maid:

‘The victory is ours!’ she cried.

Seeing the day was lost, the English now attempted to escape destruction by swimming the river; others threw themselves on a bridge, which, however, having been set on fire by the French, only caused those who hoped to cross to fall either into the flames or into the river below.

Glansdale, the English leader, who had grossly insulted Joan but a few days before, was among those who were drowning in the Loire. Seeing his peril, Joan of Arc attempted to save him, but Glansdale was swept, before her aid could reach him, down the stream, never more to return to his own land again, as Joan had prophesied.

Five hundred English perished either in the Tournelles or were drowned in attempting to escape; the rest were made prisoners by the French.

Darkness had now fallen, and although Joan had been taking part in the 192

battle for more than a dozen hours, and had besides been grievously hurt, she would not leave the field till late in the night, in case the English at the Bastille of Saint Laurent should be inclined to avenge the fall of the Tournelles, and the victory over their comrades. But for that day, at all events, the English had had enough of fighting: ‘ils n’en avaient une vouloir’ for more, as the old chronicler quaintly expresses himself.

Riding back across the bridge which the citizens had in the meanwhile partally restored, Joan re-entered the city which her splendid courage had rescued from the English. ‘God knows,’ writes Perceval de Cagny, ‘with what joy she was received’; and our English historan of those days, Hall, has left the following graphic account of the joy that went out from the people of Orleans to their saviour:—

‘After the siege was thus broken up, to tell you what triumphs were made in the city of Orleans, what wood was spent in fire, what wine was drunk in houses, what songs were sung in the streets, what melody was made in

taverns, what rounds were danced in large and broad places, what lights were set up in the churches, what anthems were sung in chapels, and what joy was showed in every place—it were a long work, and yet no necessary cause. For they did as we in like case would have done; and we, being in like estate, would have done as they did.'

All that day Joan of Arc had eaten nothing, and her strength must have been more than mortal to have sustained the heat, fatigue, and, above all, the anguish of her wound. At length she was able to find some repose with her kind hosts, and, after taking a little bread dipped in wine, she retired to enjoy her well-earned rest.

Orleans was now delivered, as the citizens found on waking the next morning after the battle, when the joyful news spread through the town that the English had abandoned the bastilles on the northern side of the city, leaving all their sick, stores, artillery, and ammunition. That day Lord Talbot must have used expressions probably not as poetical as those put into his mouth in the play of _Henry VI._; but doubtless far more forcible—for it was now that he, for the first time, felt the bitterness of defeat, the shame of turning his back on his enemy; that enemy whom, until now, he had, after so many victories, almost grown to despise.

'My thoughts are whirled like a potter's wheel; I know not where I am, nor what I do: A witch, by fear, not force, like Hannibal, Drives back our troops, and conquers as she lists.'

But although retire he had to, Talbot's retreat was made in perfect order, 193

and in a kind of defant fashion. Ranging his forces near to and facing the town, he seemed inclined to make a further stand, if not to carry out an attack against the city. Joan was prepared to repel such an attack, but the English contented themselves with a mere feint, a military demonstration.

The day was a Sunday, and Joan, ever loath to fight on that day, refused to give the signal for attack, saying that if the enemy chose to begin an engagement they would be met and defeated; but that she could not sanction

fighting on that holy day. Prepared for whatever might occur, the Maid of Orleans then ordered that Mass should be said at the head of her troops.

When the religious act was over:

'Look,' she said, 'whether the English have their faces or their backs turned to us.'

And when she heard that they were in full retreat on Mehun-sur-Loire, she added, 'Let them depart, in God's name: it is not His wish that you should attack them to-day, and you will meet them again.'

After an hour's halt, the English continued to retreat, previously setting fire to their bastilles, and carrying their prisoners with them.

The day that saw the deliverance of Orleans was held for centuries as a national day of rejoicing in the town, and seldom have the citizens of any place had better cause for celebrating so joyful and honourable an event. The siege which Joan had thus brought to an end began on the 12th of October (1428), and ended on the 8th of May (1429). Ten days had sufficed for the heroic Maid to raise the English blockade.

Throughout France the effect of the news of the deliverance of Orleans was prodigious; and although most of the English, no doubt, believed that the result was owing to the instrumentality of the powers of darkness, many saw in it the finger of God.

When the great news reached Paris on the 10th of May, Fauconbridge, a clerk of Parlament, made the following note in his register:—'Quis eventus fuerit novit Deus bellorum'; and on the margin of the register he has traced a little pro-file sketch of a woman in armour, holding in her right hand a pennon on which are inscribed the letters I.H.S. In the other hand she holds a sword. This parchment may still be seen in the National Archives in Paris.

A MISSION FROM GOD

Joan, having accomplished her undertaking, lost no time in returning to the King at Chinon.

Leaving the now free and happy town to jubilate in its deliverance from the enemy, Joan of Arc went by Blois and Tours to Chinon. At Tours the King had come to meet the Maid. When within sight of the King, Joan dismounted and knelt before him. Charles came forward bareheaded to meet her, and embraced her on the cheek; and, to use the words of the chronicler, made her '_grande chAre_'. It was on this occasion that the King bestowed on Joan of Arc the badge of the Royal Lily of France to place in her coat-of-arms. The cognizance consisted of a sword supporting a royal crown, with the fleur-de-lis on either side.

Joan now strongly urged the King to lose no time, but at once go to Rheims, to be crowned. The fact of his being crowned and proclaimed King of France would add infinitely to his prestige and authority; he would then no longer be a mere Dauphin or King of Bourges, as the English and Burgundans styled him. But now Joan found how many at Court were lukewarm. The council summoned to deliberate on her proposal alleged that the King's powers and purse would not enable him to make so long and hazardous an expedition. Joan used every argument in favour of setting out forthwith for Rheims: she declared that the time given to her for carrying out her mission was short, and, according to the Duke of Alencon's testimony, she said that after the King was crowned she would deliver the Duke of Orleans from his captivity in England, but that she had only one year in which to accomplish this task; and therefore she prayed that there might be no delay in starting for Rheims.

Charles was now staying at the Castle of Loches, that gloomy prison-fortress whose dungeons were to become so terribly notorious in the succeeding reign. Joan, whose impatience for action carried her beyond the etiquette of the Court, entered on one occasion into the King's private apartment, where the feeble and irresolute monarch was consulting with his confessor the

Bishop of Castres, Christophe d'Harcourt, and Robert de MaÁon. Kneeling, the Maid said:—

'Noble Dauphin, hold not such long and so many councils, but start at once for Rheims, and there receive your crown.'

'Do your voices inspire this advice?' asked the King's confessor.

'Yes,' was the answer, 'and with vehemence.'

A MISSION FROM GOD

‘Then,’ said the Bishop, ‘will you not tell us in the King’s presence in what way your voices communicate with you?’

To this Jesuitical query, Joan, in her simple and straightforward manner, answered the priest, that when she met with people who doubted the truth of her mission she would retire to her room and pray, and then voices returned and spoke to her:—’Go forward, daughter of God, and we will assist you,’ and how hearing those voices and those words she would rejoice and take courage, and only long that her then state of happiness might last always. While telling them these things she seemed a being transformed, surrounded by a something Divine and holy.

It was not unnatural that the King and his councillors should hesitate before making up their minds to undertake the journey to Rheims, for the English were posted in force at Beaugency, at Meun, where Talbot was encamped, and at Jargeau. They also held a strong position on the Loire; it would be difficult to reach Rheims without encountering some of their forces. Jargeau had been attacked, indeed, by Dunois and Xaintrailles, but unsuccessfully; and there was real danger in going northwards while the English were still so plentiful and so strongly entrenched in the towns of the centre and south of France. Another reason for delaying the journey to Rheims and the ceremony of the coronation, was that some time must elapse before the princes and great nobles, who would have to take part in the coronation, could assemble at Rheims.

Joan, thus thwarted in her wish of marching directly on to Rheims, suggested driving the English from their fortresses and encampments on the Loire. To this scheme the royal consent was obtained, and the Duke of Alencon was placed in command of a small force of soldiers. Joan directed the expedition, and it was ordered that nothing should be done without the sanction of the Maid.

In a letter, dated the 8th June, 1429, written by the young Count of Laval, who met Joan of Arc in Selles in Berri, the place of rendezvous for the expedition, is a pleasant notice of the impression the heroine caused him. He describes her as being completely armed, except that her head was bare. She entertained the Count and his brother at Selles. 'She ordered some wine,' he writes, 'and told me that I should soon drink wine with her in Paris.' He adds that it was marvellous to see and hear her. He also describes her leaving Selles that same evening for Romorantin, with a portion of her troops. 'We saw her,' he writes, 'clothed all in white armour excepting her head; her charger, a great black one, plunged and reared at the door of her lodging, so that she could not mount him. Then she said,

"Lead him to the Cross," which cross stood in front of the church on the high road.

And then he stood quite still before the cross, and she mounted him; then as she 196

was riding away she turned her face to the people who were standing near the door of the church; in her clear woman's voice she said:—"You priests and clergy, make processions, and pray to God for our success." Then she gave the word to advance, and with her banner borne by a handsome page, and with her little battle-axe in her hand, she rode away.'

The church before which this scene took place at Selles-sur-Cher still exists, a fine massive building, dating from between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries; but the old cross that stood before it, to which Joan of Arc's black charger was led, has long ago disappeared.

In my opinion, this graphic description of the Maid of Orleans, written by Guy de Laval to his parents, is the best that has come down to our day of the heroine. There is to us a freshness about it which proves how deeply the writer must have been stirred by that wonderful character; it shows too that, with all her intensely religious and mystic temperament, Joan of Arc had a good part of spright-liness and bonhomie in her character, which endeared her to those whose good fortune it was to meet her.

The incident of the black charger standing so still beside the cross, and the figure of the Maid, mystic, wonderful, in her white panoply, with her head bare—

that head which, in spite of no authentic portrait having come down to us, we cannot but imagine a grand and noble one—make up a living picture of historic truth, far above the fancies evolved out of the brains of any writer of fiction—for is it not romance realised?

The eagerness to accompany Joan of Arc in this expedition of the Loire was great. The Duke of Alencon wrote to his mother to sell his lands in order that money might be raised for the army. The King was unable or unwilling to pay out of his coffers the expenses of the campaign. From all sides came officers and men eager for new victories under the banner of the Maid.

Joan led the vanguard, followed by Alencon, de Rais, Dunois, and Gaucourt.

At Orleans they were joined by fresh forces under Vendume and Boussac. On the 11th of June the army amounted to eight thousand men. Jargeau was the first place to be attacked. Here Suffolk, with between six and seven thousand men, all picked soldiers, had established himself. Inferior in numbers, the English had the advantage over the French in their artillery. In the meanwhile, Bedford, who had news of Suffolk's peril, sent Fastolfe to Jargeau, with a fresh force of five thousand men.

But for some reason or other Fastolfe seemed in no hurry to come to Suffolk's assistance; he lost four days at Etampes, and four more at Jauville. Some alarm seems 197

to have been felt among the French troops at the news of Fastolfe's approach. Joan mildly rebuked those who showed anxiety by saying to them: 'Were I not sure of success, I would prefer to keep sheep than to endure these perils.'

The faubourgs of the town of Jargeau were attacked and taken, but before storming the place, Joan, according to her habit, sent a summons to the

army. She bade the enemy surrender: doing so, he would be spared, and allowed to depart with his side-arms; if he refused, the assault should be made at once. The English demanded an armistice of fifteen days: hardly a reasonable request when it is remembered that Fastolfe, with his reinforcements, might any day arrive before Jargeau. Joan said they might leave, taking their horses with them, but within the hour. To this the English would not consent, and it was decided to attack upon the following morning.

The next day was a Tuesday; the signal was given at nine in the morning.

Joan had the trumpets sounded, and led on the attacking column in person. Alencon appears to have thought the hour somewhat early; but Joan overruled him by telling him that it was the Divine will that the engagement should then take place.

'Travaillez,' she repeated, 'Travaillez! et Dieu travaillera!'

These words may well be called Joan of Arc's life motto, and the secret of her success. 'Had she,' she asked Alencon, 'ever given him reason to doubt her word?' And she reminded him how she had promised his wife to bring him, Alencon, back safe and sound from this expedition. Joan seems throughout that day's fighting to have watched over the Duke's safety with much anxious care; at one hour of the day she bade him leave a position from which he was watching the attack, as she told him that if he remained longer in that place he would get slain from some catapult or engine, to which she pointed on the walls. Hardly had the Duke left the spot when a Seigneur de Lude was struck and killed by a shot from the very engine about which Joan had warned Alencon.

Hour after hour raged the attack; both Joan and Alencon directed the storming parties under a heavy fire. A stone from a catapult struck Joan on her helmet as she was in the act of mounting a ladder—she fell back, stunned, into the ditch, but soon revived, and rising, with her undaunted courage, she turned to hearten her followers, declaring that the victory would be theirs. In a few more moments the place was in possession of the French. Suffolk fled to the bridge which spanned the Loire: there he was captured. A soldier named Willam Regnault beat him to the ground, but Suffolk refused to yield to one so low in rank, and is said to have dubbed his

victor knight before giving him up his sword. Besides Suffolk, a brother of his was taken, and four or five hundred men were killed or captured. The place 198

was pillaged. The most important of the prisoners were shipped to Orleans.

The following day Joan returned to Orleans with Alencon, where they remained two days to rest their men, after which they proceeded to Meun. This was a strongly fortified town on the Loire, about an equal distance from Orleans on the west and from Jargeau on the east.

The first success of the French was the occupation of a bridge held by the English. They then descended the river, and attacked the town of Beaugency. This town had been abandoned by the English garrison, who had thrown themselves into the castle. Here it was that the army of the Loire was joined by the Constable de Richemont, who could be almost considered as a little monarch in his own territory of Brittany. This magnate appears to have been a somewhat unwelcome addition to Joan and Alencon's army. He was, however, tolerated, if not welcomed.

Alencon and the Constable, who had till now been at enmity, were reconciled by Joan's influence, and she paved the way for a reconcilation between Richemont and the King.

It was high time that all the French princes should be reconciled, for the danger from the invaders was still great even in the immedate circle of the Court and army. A strong body of men was known to be on the way from Paris, under the command of Fastolfe, and Talbot was marching to meet him with a force from the Loire district; they soon met, and together proceeded directly upon Orleans.

Fastolfe appears to have been disinclined to attack, his force being smaller than that of the French; but Talbot was beside himself with rage at having to retreat from Orleans, and swore by God and St. George that, even had he to fight the enemy alone, fight he would. Fastolfe had to give way to the fiery lord, although he told his commander that they had but a handful of men

compared to the French; and that if they were beaten, all that King Henry V. had won in France with so much loss of life would be again lost to the English.

Leaving some troops to watch the English garrisons in the castle of Beaugency, Joan marched against the English. The hostile armies met some two miles between Beaugency and Meun. The English had taken up a place of vantage on the brow of a hill; their archers as usual were placed in the front line, and before them bristled a stockade. The French force numbered about six thousand, led by Joan of Arc, the Duke of Alencon, Dunois, Lafayette, La Hire, Xaintrailles, and other officers.

It was late in the day when heralds from the English lines arrived with a defant message for the French. Joan's answer was firm and dignified. 'Go,' she 199

said to the heralds, 'and tell your chiefs that it is too late for us to meet to-night, but to-morrow, please God and our Lady, we shall come to close quarters.'

The English were still strongly fortified in the little town of Meun. A portion of their army left Beaugency in order to effect a junction with their other comrades, and in perfect order Talbot commenced his retreat on Paris, taking the northern road through the wooded land of La Beauce. They were closely followed by the French, but neither army had any idea how near they were to one another till a stag, startled by the approach of the French, crossed the English advanced guard. The shouts of the English soldiers on seeing the stag gallop by was the first sign the French had of the propinquity of their foes. A hasty council of war was held by the French commanders. Some were for delay and postponing the attack until all their forces should be united; and these, the more prudent, pointed out the inferiority of their force to that of the enemy, arguing that a battle under the circumstances, in the open country, would be hazardous. Joan of Arc, however, would not listen to these monitions. 'Even,' she cried, 'if they reach up to the clouds we must fight them!' And she prophesied a complete victory.

Although, as ever, anxious to command the attack, she allowed La Hire to lead the van. His orders were to prevent the enemy advancing, and to keep him on the defensive till the entire French force could reach the ground. La Hire's attack proved so impetuous that the English rearguard broke and fled back in confusion. Talbot, who had not had time, so sudden and unexpected had been the French attack, to place his archers and defend the ground, as was his wont, with palisades and stockades, turned on the enemy like a lion at bay. Fastolfe now came up to Talbot's succour; but his men were met by the rout of the rearguard of the broken battle, and the fugitives caused a panic among the new-comers. In vain did Sir John attempt to rally his men and face the enemy. After a hopeless struggle, he too was borne off by the tide of fugitives. One of these, an officer named Waverin, states the English loss that day to have amounted to two thousand slain and two hundred taken, but Dunois gives a higher figure, and places the English killed at four thousand.

This battle of Patay was the most complete defeat that the English had met with during the whole length of that war of a hundred years between France and England; and, to add to its completeness, the hitherto undefeated Talbot was himself amongst the taken.

'You little thought,' said Alencon to him, when brought before him, 'that this would have happened to you!'

‘’Tis the fortune of war,’ was the old hero’s laconic answer.

The effects of this victory of Patay on the fortunes of the English in France were greater than the deliverance of Orleans, and far more disastrous, for the French had now for the first time beaten in the open field their former victors. The once invincible were now the vanquished, and the great names of Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt had lost their glamour. When the news was known that the English under Talbot and Fastolfe had been beaten, and that the great commander for so many years the terror of France had been made a prisoner, and that these mighty deeds had been accomplished by the advanced guard of the French army under the inspiration of the Maid of Orleans, the whole country felt that the knell of doom of the English occupation in France had rung.

There is an anecdote relating to Joan of Arc at Patay that should find a place here. After the battle, and while the prisoners were being marched off by the French, Joan was distressed to see the brutality with which those captives unable to pay a ransom were treated. One poor fellow she saw mortally wounded by his captors. Flinging herself from her saddle, she knelt by the side of the dying man, and, having sent for a priest to shrive him, she remained by the poor fellow’s side and attended to him to the end, and by her tender ministrations helped him to pass more gently over the dark valley of death.

Michelet discovered this story in the deposition of Joan of Arc’s page, Louis de Contes, who was probably an eye-witness of the scene.

With this brillant victory at Patay closed Joan of Arc’s short but glorious campaign on the Loire. Briefly, this was the career of her victories:—On the 11th of June the Maid attacked Jargeau, which surrendered the next day. On the 13th she re-entered Orleans, where she rallied her troops. On the 15th she occupied the bridge at Meun, and the following day she attacked Beaugency, which yielded on the day after. The English had in vain hoped to

relieve Jargeau: they arrived too late. After the fall of Beaugency they fell back, and were defeated at Patay on the 18th.

A wonderful week's work was this campaign, ordered and led by a maiden of eighteen. What made Joan of Arc's success more remarkable is the fact that among the officers who served under her many were lukewarm and repeatedly foiled her wishes. And it is not difficult to trace the feeling of jealousy that existed among her officers; for here was one not knight or noble, not prince, or even soldier, but a village maiden, who had succeeded in a few days in turning the whole tide of a war, which had lasted with disastrous effects for several generations, into 201

a succession of national victories. This professional jealousy, as one may call it, among the French military leaders was fomented and aggravated by the perfidi-ous counsellors about the King. The only class who thoroughly apprecated and were really worthy of the Maid and her mission, were the people. And it is still by the people that everlasting gratitude and love of the heroic Maid are most deeply felt.

While Joan was gaining a succession of victories on the Loire, the indolent King was on a visit to La TremoÔlle at his castle of Sully-sur-Loire. Accompanied by Alencon and the Constable Richemont, Joan repaired to Sully. She had promised to make the peace between Charles and Richemont, and as the Constable had brought with him from his lands in Brittany fifteen hundred men as a peace-offering, the reconcilation was not a matter of much difficulty. La TremoÔlle saw with an evil feeling the ever-growing popularity of Joan, and feared her daily increasing influence with the King; but he could not prevent the march on Rheims, much as he probably wished to do so. It was arranged that the army should be concentrated at Gien. From Gien, Joan addressed a letter to the citizens of Tournay, a town of doubtful loyalty to Charles, and much under the influence of the Burgundan party. She summoned in this letter those who were loyal to Charles to attend the King's forthcoming coronation.

On the 28th of June the King and Court left Gien, on their northern march.

That march was not a simple matter, for a country had to be traversed in which the towns and castles still bristled with English garrisons, or with doubtful allies.

Auxerre belonged to the Burgundan party, always in allance with the English; Troyes was garrisoned with a mixed force of English and Burgundans; and the strongly fortified places on the Loire, such as Marchenois, Cosne, and La CharitE, were still held by the English troops. Charles' army had no artillery; it was therefore out of the question to storm or besiege towns however hostile, and the counsellors and creatures of the King urged him not to risk the dangers of a journey to Rheims under such disadvantageous circumstances.

Joan, wearied out by the endless procrastination and hesitation of the King, left him, and preferred a free camp in the open fields to the purlieus of the Court, with its feeble sovereign and plotting courtiers. Joan of Arc on this occasion may be said to have 'sulked,' but she showed her usual common sense in what she did, and her leaving the Court seems to have given the vacillating King a momentary feeling of shame and remorse. Orders were issued that the Court should be moved on the 29th of June.

The royal army which started on that day for Rheims numbered twelve thou-

sand men; but this force was greatly increased on its march. By the side of the King rode the Maid of Orleans; on the other side of the King, Alencon. The Counts of Clermont, of Vendume, and of Boulogne—all princes of the blood—came next.

Dunois, the MarEchal de Boussac (Saint-SevAre), and Louis Admiral de Culan followed. And then, in a crowd of knights and captains, rode the Seigneurs de Rais, de Laval, de Loheac, de Chauvigny, La Hire, Xaintrailles, La TremoÔlle, and many others.

Before the town of Auxerre a halt was called: it was still under the influence of the English and Burgundans. A deputation waited upon Charles,

provisions were sent to the army, but the town was not entered. Outside its fortifications the army rested three days, after which it continued its march to Saint-Florentin, whose gates swung open to the King; thence on to Brinon l'ArchevÍque, whence Charles forwarded a messenger with a letter to his lieges at Rheims, announcing his approach.

On the 4th of July the royal force had reached Saint-Fal, near Troyes. Joan of Arc despatched a messenger summoning that place to open its gates to the King; but Troyes was strongly garrisoned by a force of half English half Burgundan soldiers, and these had sent for succour to the English Regent, the Duke of Bedford.

The army of the King arrived before the gates of the town on the 4th of July; a sally was made by the hostile garrison, but this was driven back. _Pourparlers_ ensued. The King's heralds were informed by the garrison officers that they had sworn to the Duke of Burgundy not to allow, without his leave, any other troops to enter their gates. They went further, and insulted the Maid of Orleans in gross terms, calling her a '_cocquarde_'—whatever that ugly term may mean.

The situation was embarrassing. How could the town be taken without a siege train and artillery? But to leave it in the rear, with its strong garrison, would be madness. The King's men were in favour of retiring and abandoning the expedition to Rheims. There happened to be within the town of Troyes at this time a famous monk of the preaching kind, named Father Richard. Father Richard had been a pilgrim, and had visited the Holy Land, and had made himself notorious by interminable sermons, for he was wont to preach half-a-dozen hours at a time.

Crowds had listened to him in Paris and other places. The English, who probably thought his sermons insufferably long, or too much leavened with French sympathies, drove him out of Paris, and he had taken refuge at Troyes. The monk had heard much of Joan of Arc, and was eager to see and speak with her, but his enthusasm was mixed with a religious and even superstitious fear in regard to the heroine. He was allowed to enter the royal precincts, and approached the Maid of Orleans with many a sign of the cross, and with sprinkling of holy water. Seeing the good man's terror, Joan told him to approach her without fear.

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‘Come forward boldly!’ she said to the monk. ‘I shall not fly away!’

And after convincing him that she was not a demon in any way, she made him the bearer of a letter from her to the people in the town. The negotations between the army and the burghers lasted five days; the town refusing to admit the King, and the King unwilling to pass the town, but unable to take it by force.

Charles was on the point of giving up the attempt to reach Rheims when one of his Council pointed out that as the expedition had been undertaken at the instigation of Joan of Arc, it was only fair her judgment should now be followed, and not that of any one else. Joan was summoned before the Council, when she solemnly assured the King that in three days’ time the place would be taken.

‘If we were sure of it,’ said the Chancellor, ‘we would wait here six days.’

‘Six days!’ said the Maid. ‘You will enter Troyes to-morrow.’

Mounting her horse, the Maid rode into the camp, and ordered all to prepare to carry out a general assault on the next morning. Anything that could be used in the shape of furniture and fagots, to make a bridge across the town ditches, was collected. Joan, who had now her tent moved up close to the moat, worked harder, says an eye-witness, than any two of the most skilful captains in preparing the attack. She directed that fascines should be thrown into the moat, across which the troops were to pass to the town.

Early next day everything was in readiness for the attack, but at this juncture, just as she was preparing to lead the storming party, the Bishop of Troyes, John Laiguise, attended by a deputation of the principal citizens, came from the town with offers of capitulation. The people were ready to place themselves at the King’s mercy, owing probably to the terror the preparations made by Joan of Arc on the previous evening had inspired them

with, mixed, too, with the superstitious dread they felt for her presence. Had not even the English soldiers declared that, when attacked by the terrible Maiden, they had seen what appeared to be flights of white butterflies sparkling all around her form! How could these good people of Troyes hope to withstand such a power? To add to this fear, it was remembered by the citizens of Troyes that in it had been signed and concluded the shameful treaty by which Charles VII. had been disinherited from his crown and possessions. The people therefore gave in without further struggle. The conditions of capitulation were soon arranged. The burghers were granted the immu-nity of their persons and their goods, and certain liberties for their commerce. All those traders who held any office at the hands of the English government were to 204

continue the enjoyment of these offices or benefices, with the condition of taking them up again at the hands of the King of France. No garrison would be quartered upon the town, and the English and Burgundan soldiers were to be allowed to depart with their goods.

The next day—the 10th of July—Charles and his host entered Troyes in state, the Maid of Orleans riding by the side of the King, her banner displayed as was her custom.

When, as had been arranged in the treaty of capitulation, the foreign soldiers began to leave the place with bag and baggage (goods), Joan was indignant at finding that some of these so-called goods were nothing less than French prisoners. This was a thing that she could not tolerate, treaty or no treaty; and, placing herself at the gate of the town, she insisted that her imprisoned countrymen should be left in her charge. The King naturally felt obliged to gratify her; so he released the captives, and paid their ransom down. Before leaving Troyes the next day, Willam Bellier, who had been Joan's host at Chinon, was left as bailiff of the place, along with other officers.

Thence the army moved on by way of Châlons. Though still in the hands of the English, a deputation of clergy and citizens met the King, and placed themselves at his orders.

While in the neighbourhood of Châlons, Joan of Arc met some friends who had arrived from Domremy; among them were two old village companions, Gerardin d'Epinal and John Morel, to whom she gave her red dress. In conversation with these she said that the only dread she had in the future was treachery: a dread which seems to point in some strange prophetic manner to the fate which was so soon to meet her at Compagne.

It was on the evening of the 16th of July that the royal host at length came in sight of the massive towers of the great cathedral church of Rheims. It was at Sept Saulx, about eight miles' distance from Rheims, that the King waited for a deputation to reach him from the town. Rheims was still filled with the English and Burgundan adherents, and had Bedford chosen to throw, as he could well have done, a force into that place, Charles might yet have been prevented from entering its gates. Perhaps Bedford did not believe in the possibility of Charles arriving at his goal, and had counted on the King's well-known weakness and indecision, and on the hesitation of such men as La TremoÔlle and others of his Council.

The Regent had received assurances from the officals in Rheims that they would not admit Charles. But after what passed at Troyes and at Châlons, Charles had not 205

long to wait for a favourable answer from his lieges at Rheims. Indeed, the deputation which met him at Sept Saulx were effusive in their good offices and entreaties that the King should forthwith enter his good city of Rheims.

The Archbishop (Regnault de Chartres), who had preceded the King by a few hours to his town, came out to meet the King at the head of the corporation and civic companies. From all sides flocked crowds eager to welcome the King, and even more the Maid of Orleans. In those days the people's cry of joy and triumph was '_NoÎl!_'—but why that cr y of Christmas joy had become the popular hosanna, it is not easy to conjecture.

Throughout that night the preparations for the coronation were feverishly made both within and without the cathedral. On the 17th of July, with all the pomp and ceremony that the church and army could bestow, the King was

crowned and anointed with the holy oil which four of his principal officers had brought to the cathedral from the ancient abbey church of Saint-Remy.

There exist few grander fanes in Christendom than the great cathedral of Rheims. The thirteenth century, so prolific of splendid churches, had expended all its wealth of lavish decoration on the gorgeous portal, with its array of saints and sovereigns, under which passed Charles VII. of France, with the Maid of Orleans on his right hand. Hurried as had been the preparations for the ceremonal, the even then ancient and venerable rites must have deeply impressed the spectators, and the semi-sacred act was carried out with scrupulous care—the King crowned and anointed with the holy oil, surrounded on his throne by the ecclesastical peers and high dignitaries of the Church, and waited on by the secular peers during the crowning and after at the coronation banquet.

At length was accomplished the darling wish of Joan of Arc's heart, for now her King was regarded and sanctioned by all true French persons as King of France, by the grace of God and Holy Church.

When the King received the crown from the hands of the Archbishop, a peal of trumpets rang out, with such a mighty volume of sound that the very roof of the cathedral seemed to shake again. Ingres, in his striking picture of Joan of Arc, now in the gallery of the Louvre, represents her standing by the high altar, clad in her white panoply of shining steel, her banner held on high; below bows in prayer her confessor, the priest Pasquerel, in his brown robes of the Order of Augustin; and beyond stand her faithful squire and pages. The heroine's face is raised, and on it sits a radant look of mingled gratitude and triumph. It is a noble idea of a sublime figure.

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When the long-drawn-out ceremony came to an end, and after the people had shouted themselves hoarse in crying ‘NoÎl!’ and ‘Long live King Charles!’—

Joan, who had remained by the King throughout the day, knelt at his feet and, according to one chronicle, said these words:

‘Now is finished the pleasure of God, who willed that you should come to Rheims and receive your crown, proving that you are truly the King, and no other, to whom belongs this land of France.’

Many besides the King are said to have shed tears at that moment.

That seemed indeed the moment of Joan of Arc’s triumph. The Nunc Dimittis might well have then echoed from her lips; but in the midst of all the rejoicing and festivity at this time Joan had saddened thoughts and melancholy forebodings as to the future. While the people shouted ‘NoÎl!’ as she rode through the jubilant streets by the side of the King, she turned to the Archbishop, and said: ‘When I die I should wish to be buried here among these good and devout people.’

And on the prelate asking her how it was that at such a moment her mind should set itself on the thought of death, and when she expected her death to happen, she answered: ‘I know not—it will come when God pleases; but how I would that God would allow me to return to my home, to my sister and my brothers! For how glad would they be to see me back again. At any rate,’ she added, ‘I have done what my Saviour commanded me to do.’

Her mission was indeed accomplished: that is to say, if her mission consisted of the two great deeds which while at Chinon she had repeatedly assured her listeners she was born to accomplish. These were, first, to drive the English out of Orleans, and thereby deliver that town; the second, to take the King to Rheims, where he would receive his crown. The other

enterprises, such as the wish to deliver the Duke of Orleans from his captivity in England, and then to wage a holy war against the Moslems, may be left out of the actual task which, encouraged by her voices, Joan had set herself to accomplish. But the two great deeds had now been carried out—and with what marvellous rapidity! In spite of all the obstacles placed in her path, not only by the enemies of her country, but by those nearest to the ear of the King, Orleans had been delivered in four days'

time, the English host had been in a week driven out of their strongholds on the Loire, and defeated in a pitched battle! The King unwillingly, and with many of his Court opposed to the enterprise, after passing through a country strongly occupied by the enemy without having lost a man, had by the tact and courage of Joan 207

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of Arc been enabled to reach Rheims; and after this successful march he had received his crown among his peers and lieges, as though the country were again at peace, and no English left on the soil of France. What was still more surprising was, that all these things should have been accomplished at the instigation and by the direction of a Maid who only a few months before had been an unknown peasant in a small village of Lorraine. How had she been able not only to learn the tactics of a campaign, the rudiments of the art of war, but even the art itself? No one had shown in these wars a keener eye for selecting the weakest place to attack, or where artillery and culverin fire could be used with most effect, or had been quicker to avail himself of these weapons. No one saw with greater rapidity—(that rarest of military gifts)—when the decisive moment had arrived for a sudden attack, or had a better judgment for the right moment to head a charge and assault. How indeed must the knights and commanders, bred to the use of arms since their boyhood, have wondered how this daughter of the peasants had obtained the knowledge which had placed her at their head, and enabled her to gain successes and reap victories against the enemy, which until she came none of them had any hope of obtaining. They indeed could not account for it, except that in Joan of Arc was united not only the soul of patriotism and a faith to move mountains, but the qualities of a great captain as well. That, it seems to us, must have been the conclusion that her comrades in arms arrived at regarding the Maid of Orleans.

Dunois stated that until the advent of the Maid the French had no longer the courage to attack the English in the open field, but that since she had inspired them with her courage they were ready to attack any force of the army, however superior it might be. This testimony was confirmed by Alencon also: he declared that in things outside the province of warfare she was in every respect as simple as a young girl; but in all that concerned the science of war she was thoroughly skilled, from the management of a lance in rest to that of marshalling an army; and that as regarded the use of artillery she was eminently qualified. All the military commanders, he said, were amazed to see in her as much skill as could be expected in a seasoned captain who had profited by a training of from twenty to thirty years. 'But,' added the Duke, 'it is principally in her use of artillery that she displays her most complete talent.' And he proceeds to bear his high tribute to her goodness of heart, which she displayed on every possible occasion.

Although her physical courage enabled her to face the greatest perils and personal risks, she had a horror of bloodshed, and though her spirit was 'full of haughty courage, not fearing death nor shrinking distress, but resolute in most extremes,' she never entered battle but bearing her banner in her hand; and to the last day of her appearance on the field she strove with all her great moral 208

force to induce the rude and brutal men around her to become more humane even in the hurly-burly of the din of battle. All unnecessary cruelty and bloodshed made her suffer intensely, and we have seen how she ministered to the English wounded who had fallen in fight. As far as she could she prevented pillage, and she would only promise her countrymen success on the condition that they should not prey upon the citizens of the places they conquered. Even when she had passed the day fasting on horseback, Joan would refuse any food unless it had been honourably obtained. As a child she had been taught to be charitable and to give to the needy, and she carried out these Christan principles when at the head of armies; the 'quality of mercy' with her was ever present. She distributed to the poor all she had with her, and would say, with what truth God knows, 'I have been sent for the consolation of the poor and the relief of the needy.' She would take upon herself the charge of the wounded; indeed, she may be considered as the

precursor of all the noble hearts who in modern warfare follow armies in order to allevate and help the sick and wounded. And she tended with equal care and sympathy the wounded among the enemy, as well as those of her own side.

This is no invention, no fancy of romance, but the plain truth; for there can be no disputing the testimony of those who followed Joan of Arc and saw her acts.

Regarding herself, Joan of Arc said she was but a servant and an instrument under Divine command. When people would avow that such works as she had carried out had never been done in former times, she would simply say: 'My Saviour has a book in which no one has ever read, however learned a scholar he may be.'

In all things she was pure and saint-like, and her wonderful life, as Michelet has truly said of it, was a living legend. Had she not been inspired by her voices and her visions to take up arms for the salvation of her country, Joan of Arc would probably have lived and ended her obscure life in some place of holy retreat. An all-absorbing love for all things sacred was her ruling idiosyncrasy. From her childhood her delight was to hear the church bells, the music of anthems, the sacred notes of the organ. Never did she miss attending the Church festivals. When within hail of a church it was her wont, however hurried the march, to enter, attended by any of the soldiers whom she could induce to follow her, and kneel with them before the altar. At the close of some stirring day passed in the midst of the din of battle, and after being for hours in the saddle, she would, ere she sought rest, always return thanks to her God and His saints for their succour.

Joan also loved to mix in the crowd of poor citizens, and begged that the 209

little children should be brought to her. Pasquerel, her confessor, was always told to remind Joan of Arc of the feast days on which children were allowed to receive the Communion, in order that she too might receive it with these innocents.

The army has probably ever been the home of high swearing: the expression in French of '_ton de garnison_' is an amable way of referring to that habit of speech; and we all know ancient warriors whose conversation is thickly larded with oaths and profanity. This habit Joan of Arc seems to have held in great abhorrence. We have seen how she got La Hire to swear only by his stick; to another officer of high rank, who had been making use of some strong oaths, she said:

'How can you thus blaspheme your Saviour and your God by so using His name?'

Let us hope her lesson bore fruit.

Throughout the land Joan of Arc was now regarded as the Saviour of France.

Nor at this time did the King prove ungrateful. In those days nobility was highly regarded. It brought with it great prestige, and much benefit accrued to the hold-ers of titles. Charles now raised the Maid of Orleans to the equal in rank of a Count, and bestowed upon her an establishment and household. The grateful burghers of Orleans, too, loaded her with gifts, all which honours Joan received with quiet modesty. For herself she never asked anything. After the coronation at Rheims, when the King begged her to make him a request, the only thing she asked was, that the taxes might be taken off her native village.

Her father, who came to see her at Rheims, had the satisfaction of carrying back this news to Domremy.

Although both King and nobles vied in paying honours to Joan of Arc, it was from the common people, from the heart of the nation, that she received what seems to have amounted to a feeling approaching adoration. Wherever she passed she was followed by crowds eager to kiss her feet and her hands, and who even threw themselves before her horse's feet. Medals were struck and worn as charms, with her effigy or coat-of-arms struck on them. Her name was introduced into the prayers of the Church.

Joan, although touched by these marks of affection, never allowed the people, as far as in her power lay, to ascribe unearthly influence to her person.

When in the course of her tral the accusation that the people had made her an object of adoration was brought as a proof of her heresy, she said: ‘In truth I should not have been able to have prevented that from being so, had God not protected me Himself from such a danger.’

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We must now glance at the movements of the English since the deliverance of Orleans and their defeat at Patay, and the French King's coronation.

What proves the utter demoralisation of the English at this time is that the Regent Bedford was not only afraid of remaining in Paris, but had also taken refuge in the fortress of Vincennes. He was so poor that he could not pay the members of Parlament sitting in Paris. Like other bodies receiving no pay, the Parlament declined to work. So restricted were all things then in Paris that when the child-king (Henry VI.) was brought from London to be crowned there, not enough parchment could be found on which to register the details of his arrival.

For want of a victim to assuage his ire, the Regent disgraced Sir John Fastolfe, whom he unknighted and ungartered, in order to punish him for the defeat at Patay; and he wrote that the English reverses had been caused by 'a disciple and lyme of the Feende, called the Pucelle, that used fals enchantements and sorcerie.'

The Regent, whose degrading of Fastolfe and vituperation of Joan of Arc did not serve to help, applied to his powerful brother-in-law, the Duke of Burgundy, for aid. Burgundy came to the Regent's assistance, bringing a small force with him from Picardy. Then Bedford bethought him of his powerful relation in England, Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester. Most opportunely for the Regent, the Bishop had collected an army for the suppression of the Boheman Hussites. The Regent implored his uncle, the Bishop, to send this army for the defence of the English and their interests, now in such dire jeopardy. Winchester was a mean, avaricious prince, and his aid had to be bought. A treaty was signed on the 1st of July, in which Winchester promised to bring his troops to his nephew's assistance; but he delayed stirring till the middle of that month. It pleased the crafty Bishop to know that his great wealth made him all-powerful in England; for the English Protector, the Duke of Gloucester, was a mere cipher compared to Winchester; and now that his other nephew, the Protector of France, was in

distress, he could dictate his own terms to both. It was not until the 25th of July that Winchester at length arrived with his army in Paris. Then Bedford breathed more freely, and left the capital with an army of observation to watch the movements of the French King.

It was now the earnest wish of Joan of Arc that Charles should march direct on Paris, and perhaps had he done so he might have entered that city with as little difficulty as he had entered Rheims; for if once the King of France had appeared in person, many of the wealthy citizens, as well as the majority of the common people, would have welcomed him. Charles, however, as usual vacillated, and the precious moment slipped by.

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Philip (called 'the Good'), Duke of Burgundy, was at this time one of the most powerful princes of Christendom. In addition to his titular domain, he held the wealthy provinces of Burgundy, including Brabant, Flanders, Franche-ComtE, Holland, Namur, Lower Lorraine, Luxembourg, Artois, Hainault, Zealand, Friesland, Malines, and Salines. This much-territoried potentate was at the present juncture coquetting both with Bedford and with Charles, playing one against the other. To the former he promised an army, but only contributed a handful of men; to the latter he made advances of friendship, as false as the man who made them.

Joan had despatched two letters of a concilatory tone to the Duke of Burgundy from Rheims. The original of one of these is to be seen in the archives at Lille. Like most of Joan of Arc's letters, it commences with the name of Jesus and Mary. As Joan could not write, the only portion of this letter which bears the mark of her hand is the sign of the Cross placed at the left of those names at the top of the document. She strongly urged the Duke in these letters to make peace with the King; she appeals on the score of his relationship with Charles, to his French blood, in order to prevent further bloodshed, and to aid the rightful King. While waiting some definite answer from the Duke, the King went to Vailly-sur-Aisne from Rheims. He arrived at Soissons on the 28th of July, and Château Thierry on the next day. Montmirail was reached on the 1st of August, Provins on the 2nd. It will be seen that, instead of marching straight upon Paris, the King was making a mere detour from Rheims towards the Loire.

It was soon evident that Charles and his civil councillors had no intention of advancing direct upon Paris, and were merely marching and counter-marching until they could, as they trusted, get the Duke of Burgundy to join them.

In the meanwhile, Bedford saw his opportunity, and made prompt use of it.

Early in the month of August he issued a proclamation calling on all the subjects of Henry of England in France and Normandy to rally round their liege lord. Leaving Paris on the 25th of July, Bedford marched to Melun with a force of ten thousand men. Melun was reached on the 4th of August. On the day after Bedford's arrival at Melun a letter was sent by Joan of Arc to her friends at Rheims, announcing that the King's retreat on the Loire would not be continued by his Majesty. The King had, in fact, met with a check to his advanced guard at Bray-sur-Seine. Charles had, she informed her correspondents, concluded a truce of fifteen days with the Duke of Burgundy, at the expiration of which the Duke had promised to surrender Paris to the King. But, she adds, it could not be certain whether the Duke would keep to his promise. She concludes her letter by saying that should the treaty not hold good, then the army of the King would be able to take active measures.

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This letter is vaguely dated from a lodging on the road to Paris. It was, she knew, necessary to be near the capital at the close of the period stipulated by Burgundy, and the royal army accordingly took the northern road, leading to Paris.

On the 7th of August the royal force reached Coulommiers; on the 10th La FertE Milon, and on the 11th Crespy-en-Valois. Bedford, apprised of this change in the movements of his foe, sent off an insulting letter to Charles, whom he addressed as 'Charles who called himself Dauphin, and now calls himself King!' The Regent reproaches the King for having taken the crown of France, which he said belonged to the rightful King of France and of England, King Henry; and he then styles the Maid of Orleans 'an abandoned and ill-famed woman, draped in men's clothes and leading a corrupt life.' He bids Charles to make either his peace with him or to meet him face to face. Altogether a most rude, abusive, and ungallant letter for one prince to send to another. This letter reached Charles at Crespy-en-Valois on the 11th of August. Bedford was then close at hand, and eager to pro-voke the King into attacking him.

Charles contented himself with pushing on his advanced guard as far as Dammartin, remaining himself at Lagny-le-Sec.

During the 13th of August skirmishes took place between the advanced guards of the armies, but without any result.

Bedford now returned to Paris—in order to collect more troops, some said, others that he had found the French too strong to attack. The towns and villages around Paris, hearing of these events, and that the English had returned to the capital, showed now their readiness to join the French cause.

On his way to Compagne news reached the French King that Bedford had left Paris and marched on Senlis. On the 15th of August the French attacked the English at dawn. Their army, formed into companies, was commanded

by Alencon, RenE d'Anjou, the King, who had with him La TremoÔlle, and Clermont. Joan of Arc was at the head of a detachment with Dunois and La Hire. The English held a strong position, which they had made still more so by throwing up palisades and digging ditches.

What appeared destined to be a great engagement ended in a mere skirmish. Neither Charles nor Bedford were eager to pit all on a stake, and both preferred to play a waiting game. Charles retired on Crecy, while Joan of Arc remained in the field. She had done all that courage and audacity could to induce 213

the English to attack. She had ridden up to their palisades and struck them with the staff of her banner. But nothing would make the English fight that day; and the next, Joan had the mortification of watching the retreat of the English upon Paris.

Joan had nothing now left her to do but to rejoin the King at Crecy.

On the 17th the King received the keys of the town of Compagne, and there he was welcomed on the next day with much loyalty. It was during his stay at Compagne that Charles heard the welcome news that the people of Senlis had admitted the Count of Vendume within their walls, and had bestowed on him the governorship of their town. Beauvais had also shown its loyalty, had made an ova-tion in honour of the King, and had ordered the Te Deum to be sung, greatly to the annoyance of the Bishop of that place—Peter Cauchon —a creature of the Anglo-Burgundan faction, of whom we shall hear a good deal later on.

Charles remained at Compagne until the expiration of the term during which the treaty with the Duke of Burgundy relating to the disposal of Paris remained open; but the negotations ended in Burgundy contenting himself with sending to Charles, John of Luxembourg and the Bishop of Arras with words of peace. Arrangements were projected that in order to come to a general peace the Duke of Savoy was to be called in as medator. In the meanwhile a truce was proposed, which was to last until Christmas, with the proviso that the town of Compagne should be ceded to Burgundy during the

continuance of the armistice. No allusion appears to have been made regarding the fate of Paris.

Joan of Arc, knowing that without Paris all that she had fought for and obtained would soon again be lost, resolved to see what she could do without coming to the King for assistance. She bade Alencon be ready to accompany her, as she wished, so she expressed it, to see Paris at closer quarters than she had yet been able to do.

Joan of Arc left Compagne accompanied by the Duke of Alencon on the 23rd of August, taking a strong force with them. At Senlis they collected more troops; on the 26th they arrived at Saint Denis. Here they were joined by the King, who may be supposed to have felt some shame at not having started with them from Compagne; he came very unwillingly, it is said, for all that.

Bedford left Paris precipitately for Normandy, owing to the discovery of a plot having been started to make over Rouen to the French. This event must have opened the Regent's eyes to the uncertain tenure the English held even in the old duchy of their kings. Bedford had left Louis of Luxembourg in Paris to command its garrison of two thousand English soldiers. De L'Isle Adam was in command of 214

the Burgundan soldiers. In addition to Luxembourg, who was a bishop (of ThErouanne) as well as a soldier, Bedford had given charge of the joint command to an English officer named Radley. The Bishop summoned the Parlament in order that it should swear fealty to King Henry VI. The town walls and ditches were carefully repaired and renewed. Guns were placed on the towers, walls, and batteries; immense quantities of ammunition of iron and stone were piled ready at hand, to be used for the defence of all the gates and approaches of the city. The moats were deepened, and by dint of threats and menace, and by frightening the people as to the terrible revenge the French King would take on the town and its people when it fell into his power, the citizens were cajoled into being made the agents of their natural enemies, and in sheer terror helped to strengthen the defences of their town.

During the first days of the siege only a few unimportant skirmishes took place between besieged and besiegers. Joan of Arc was indefatigable, and with her keen eye sought out the likeliest place where an assault might be successfully carried; but she lacked troops for storming such strong outworks as Paris then had. The capital was not only defended by walls and towers, but the English held both the upper and lower banks of the Seine.

From Saint Denis no assistance came from the King, and it was only on the 8th of September that, having received reinforcements, Joan of Arc was at length enabled to make a determined attack. It was a very high and holy day in the Church Calendar—the Feast of the Virgin's Nativity—and, not unmindful of the sacredness of that feast-day, Joan of Arc had determined to make a general attack; for

'the better the day the better the deed!' was her feeling on that anniversary. In those times the western limit of Paris was where now the wide thoroughfare of the Avenue de l'OpEra runs from north to south. The walls of the city erected under Charles V., flanked by huge moats and protected by double fortress towers, each tower having a double drawbridge, made any attack almost a forlorn hope. The Regent's departure from Paris points to the little fear he felt that Paris could be taken by assault; and in this matter Bedford judged rightly.

Whether or not Joan felt that some Divine assistance would enable her to surmount the barriers that lay between her and the town she was so determined to win back for her King, we cannot say. She fought below the walls with a courage which, if the others had equalled, might have made Paris their own. The attacking force was divided into two parts—one, commanded by Joan, Rais, and De Gaucourt, was to attack the city at the Gate of Saint HonorE; the other, led by Alencon and Clermont, was to cover the assailants, and prevent any sorties being made by the garrison.

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Joan's impetuous onslaught successfully carried the first barriers and the boulevard in front of the gate; but here she met with a check—the heavy gates were barred, nor could she prevail on the enemy to make a sortie.

Joan of Arc, carrying her flag, dashed, under a heavy fire, into the ditch, followed by a few of the most courageous of the soldiers. The ditch was a deep but a dry one; and rising on the further side, close beneath the town walls, was a second and a wider moat, full of water. Here, unable to advance, but unwilling to retire, Joan of Arc and her followers were exposed to a murderous hail of shot, arrows, and other missiles. Sending for fagots and fascines to be cast into the moat, in order to enable a kind of bridge to be thrown across, while probing with the staff of her banner the depth of the water, Joan was struck by a cross-bow bolt, which made a deep wound in her thigh. Refusing to leave the spot, she urged on the soldiers to fill the ditch. The day was waxing late, and the men, who had been fighting since noon, were nearly exhausted. The news of Joan having been wounded caused a kind of panic among the French. There came a lull in the fighting, and the recall was sounded. Joan had almost to be forced back from before the walls by the Duke of Alencon and other of the officers. Placed upon her horse, she was led back to the camp, Joan protesting the whole time that if the attack had only been continued it would have been crowned with success. The spot where the heroine is supposed to have been wounded is near where now stands Fremiet's spirited statue of the Maid of Orleans, between the Rue Saint HonorE—named in later days after the gate she had so gallantly attacked—and the Gardens of the Tuileries.

Within the town a great fear had fallen on the citizens, divided as they were between the hope of their countrymen forcing their way into the city and fear as to how they would be treated by Charles should he be victorious. Perhaps, had Joan of Arc's urgent entreaties of continuing the attack been more vigorously responded to by the other French commanders, she might have been in the end successful.

At any rate Joan herself was of that opinion.

The following day she was, in spite of the previous evening's failure and her wound, as urgent as ever for further fighting; and again and again implored Alencon to renew the attack. It seems the Duke was on the point of complying, when there appeared on the scene RenE d'Anjou and Clermont, sent by the King with the order for the Maid's immedate return to Saint Denis. There was nothing to do but to obey, but it must have been a bitter disappointment to the brave maiden when she turned her back on Paris. Alencon did his best to encourage her in the hope that it might yet fall. He gave orders for a bridge to be thrown across the 216

Seine at Saint Denis, in order to make a fresh attack on the city from that quarter.

However, on the next night this bridge was ordered by Charles to be removed, and with its destruction fell any hopes Joan might still have entertained of being able to take Paris.

All the blame of the want of success of the army before Paris was now laid at the door of Joan of Arc; and the creatures of the Court, who had long waited for an opportunity of this kind to show their bitter jealousy of the heroine, now made no secret of their enmity. Foremost of these was the Archbishop of Rheims, who now, in spite of Joan of Arc's entreaties, was allowed by the King to make a truce with the enemy. Another powerful foe was La TremoÔlle, who (as has been pointed out by Captain Marin in his work on Joan of Arc) thought it to be against his personal influence that the French should take Paris. La TremoÔlle had shown, from Joan's first appearance at Court, his entire want of confidence in her mission. He had unwillingly, after the examination of the Maid by the doctors and lawyers at Poitiers, conformed to the King's wish that a command should be given her in the army. He had done all in his power to induce the King not to undertake the expedition to Rheims. He had told the King, when nothing else could be urged against the journey, that there was no money in the royal coffers, and that consequently the soldiers would not receive their pay. As it turned out, volunteers offered their services gratuitously to escort Charles to

his crowning. At Auxerre, La TremoÔlle concluded a treaty with the citizens, which prevented Joan from taking that town.

At Troyes he tried to create a like impediment; but here he was foiled, for Troyes capitulated. After the coronation, he persuaded Charles not to go to Paris, but to go instead to linger in his castle on the Loire; and thereby prevented what might then have proved a successful attack on the capital. And he again succeeded in thwarting the Maid of Orleans when he resisted her wish to make a second attack upon Paris. Later on it was La TremoÔlle who tried to make Joan of Arc fail at the siege of Saint Pierre-le-Moutier. When she was unsuccessful before La CharitE-sur-Loire, and when the blame of that failure was laid at Joan's door, La TremoÔlle for very shame was obliged publicly to acknowledge the heroic zeal with which she had carried out the operations of that siege. The higher Joan's popularity rose among the people and in the army, the more her two bitter enemies, La TremoÔlle and the Archbishop of Rheims, shared between them their jealous dislike.

Thus, even before her capture and tral, Joan of Arc met with some of her worst foes among those whose duty it was to have been her staunchest friends and helpers; and, deplorable to say, among her own countrymen.

Charles left Saint Denis on the 13th of September. Before his departure, Joan of Arc performed an act which indicated that she felt her mission to be fin-217

ished. In the old fane of Saint Denis, the tomb-house of the long line of French kings, she solemnly placed her armour and arms at the foot of an image of the Holy Mother, near the spot where were kept the relics of the Patron Saint of France.

By that act of humility she seemed to wish to show her abnegation of any further earthly victory by the aid of arms.

We have now arrived at the turning-point of Joan of Arc's successes, and although the heroine is even more admirable in her days of misfortune and

suffering than in those of her triumphs, when she led her followers on from victory to victory, the course of her brief life now darkens rapidly, and the approaching fate of the brave-hearted maiden is so terrible that it requires some courage to follow her to the very end, glorious as that end was, and bright with its sainted heroism.

The King's return journey from Compagne to Gien was so hurried that it almost resembled a flight. Avoiding the towns still doubtful in their loyalty to him, Charles sped from Lagny to Bovins, then to Bray, Courtenay, Château-Regnaut, and Montargis, arriving at Gien on the 21st of September. Ere this time there could be little doubt of the Duke of Burgundy's unwillingness to abide by his pledge, and restore Paris to Charles. The Duke and Bedford had in fact already come to terms. The Regent resigned to Burgundy the Lieutenancy of the country, keeping only the now empty title of Regent and the charge of Normandy. The result of the King's withdrawal from the neighbourhood of Paris, and his hurried march, or rather retreat, to Gien, was that the English felt that there was now no longer any fear of their being drawn out of the capital. They promptly marched on and occupied Saint Denis, pillaging that town and carrying off as a trophy the arms which Joan of Arc had placed by the shrine of Saint Denis, in the ancient basilica of Dagobert.

The other towns, which had so recently returned to their allegance to Charles, were again abandoned to the English, who punished them by levying large ransoms on the citizens. The surrounding country was laid waste, and Joan of Arc had the mortification of seeing that, without any attempt being made to defend her people, the places which had so shortly before been the scene of her triumphs were now allowed to be reoccupied by the English and their allies.

Normandy, Picardy, and Burgundy were once more in possession of the enemy.

At length Joan obtained Charles' permission to attack La CharitE, where the enemy were in force, and from whence they threatened the French forts on the Loire. At Bourges she assembled a few troops, and in company with the Sire d'Albret she laid siege to Saint Pierre-le-Moutier. Then, although feebly

supported, Joan led the first column of attack. This attacking column might have been called 218

a forlorn hope, so few men had she with her. The little party were repulsed, and at one moment her squire, d'Aulon, saw that his brave mistress was fighting alone, surrounded by the English. At great peril she was rescued from the mÍlEe. Asked how she could hope to succeed in taking the place with hardly any support, she answered, while she raised her helmet, 'There are fifty thousand of my host around me,' alluding to the vision of angels that in moments of extreme peril she relied on. D'Aulon in vain urged her to beat a retreat, and retire to a place of safety; she insisted on renewing the attack, and gave orders for crossing the moat on logs and fascines. A roughly constructed bridge over the fosse was then made, and after a desperate struggle the fortress was taken.

This occurred early in the month of November (1429). A few years ago a stained-glass window commemorative of the Maid of Orleans having saved the church in Saint Pierre-le-Moutier (it had been converted by the besieged into a warehouse for the goods and chattels of the citizens) was placed in the building she had preserved from destruction.

The next siege undertaken by Joan of Arc was that of La CharitE—a far larger and more strongly garrisoned town than the other. La CharitE was held by one Peter Grasset, who had been its governor for seven years. It was not only strongly defended by fortifications, but fully victualled for a prolonged siege. Joan and her little army had not the materal necessary for carrying on such a siege as that of La CharitE would require—the very sinews of war were wanting. Charles would not or could not contribute a single Ecu d'or, and Joan had to solicit help and funds from the towns. In the public library at Riom is preserved the original letter addressed by the Maid of Orleans to 'My dear and good friends the clergy, burghers, and citizens of the town of Riom.' It was sent to that place on the 9th of November from Moulins. In this letter, the only one to which is affixed the Maid's signature, spelt 'Jehonne,' possibly signed by herself, she says that her friends at Riom are aware of how the town of Saint Pierre-le-Moutier had been taken, and she adds that she has the intention of driving out (_de faire vider_) the other

towns hostile to King Charles. She begs the citizens of Riom, in order to accomplish this, to provide her with the means of pushing forward the siege of La CharitE, and asks them to supply her with powder, saltpetre, sulphur, bows and arrows, cross-bows, and other materal of war, having exhausted all her stock of such things in the late siege.

Whether or not the burghers of Riom were able to carry out Joan's wishes is not known. The town of Bourges, however, provided funds out of its customs, and Orleans also sent soldiers and artillerymen ('_joueurs de coulverines_') to the Maid's army for the siege of La CharitE.

But in spite of all efforts Joan of Arc was destined to fail in this undertaking.

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No doubt her enemies at Court helped to thwart all her attempts at raising a sufficient force to beleaguer so strong a place of arms, and seeing her hopes of taking La CharitE by assault vanish, Joan of Arc relinquished the undertaking.

The remainder of that winter Joan of Arc passed in what must have tried her high spirit sorely—inaction.

Accompanying the Court, she went from Bourges to Sully-sur-Loire, and revisited Orleans. In the latter town we find some traces of her passage, and some further traits of her sweet nature, and of that simplicity which had endeared her so deeply to the hearts of the people: a disposition no success altered, no disappointment embittered. What was the chief charm of her character was this simplicity, her entire freedom from self-glorification, her horror of it being imagined that she was a supernatural or miraculous being, even when those supernatural and miraculous powers were considered as coming direct to her from Heaven—

in fact, to use a slang but expressive phrase, her utter freedom from humbug. This is one of the most marked features of her character, although not the most glorious or salient to those who are dazzled by her triumphs and extraordinary career.

When she was told by people that they could well understand how little she feared being in action and under fire, knowing that she had a charmed life, she answered them that she had no more assurance of not being killed than the commonest of her soldiers; and when some foolish creatures brought her their rosaries and beads to touch, she told them to touch these themselves, and that their rosaries would benefit quite as much as if she had done so.

On one occasion at Lagny she was asked to resuscitate a dead child. One of the greatest of the French nobles wrote to ask her which of the rival Popes was the true one. When asked on the eve of a battle who would be victor,

she answered that she could no more tell than any of the soldiers could. A woman named Catherine de la Rochelle, who assumed the power of knowing where money was hidden, was commanded by the King to take Joan of Arc into her confidence. The latter soon discovered that Catherine was a fraud, and refused to have anything to do with her. Catherine had suggested going to the Duke of Burgundy to arrange a peace between him and the French King, to which proposition Joan of Arc very sensibly said that it seemed to her that no peace could be made between them but at the lance's point. Joan had seen too much of the duplicity of the Duke to believe in any of his treaties and promises.

The early months of the year 1430 were months of anxiety for the citizens of Orleans and the other towns which had thrown off the English allegance. The truce 220

made between Burgundy and France expired at Christmas of the former year, but was renewed till Easter. Early in the year, the burghers of Rheims implored help of Joan of Arc, and not of the King, thus proving how far greater trust was placed in the hands of the Maid of Orleans, by such a town as Rheims, than in the goodwill of the King.

Twice during the month of March did Joan have letters written to reassure them of aid in case of need. 'Know,' she says in a letter dated the 16th of March,

'that if I can prevent it you will not be assailed; and if I cannot come to your rescue, close your gates, and I will make them [the English] buckle on their spurs in such a hurry that they will not be able to use them.'

In the second letter to the people of Rheims, written at Sully on the 28th of March, Joan tells them that they will soon hear some good news about herself.

This good news referred no doubt to her return to the field, for we find that by the end of that month she was again on the march.

It was early in the month of April, 1430, that Joan of Arc left the Court and rode to the north, on what was to prove her last expedition. It is said that while at Melun, during Easter week, she was told by her voices that she would be taken prisoner before St. John's Day.

It was at Lagny that an incident occurred which formed one of the accusations brought against the Maid by her judges, and to which reference may now be made. A freebooter, named Franquet d'Arras, had, at the head of a band of about three hundred English freelances, held all the country-side in terror round about Lagny. Hearing of this, being in the neighbourhood of Lagny, Joan of Arc gave orders that Franquet and his band should be attacked. The French were in number about equal to the English. After a stubborn fight, the English were all killed or captured. Among the latter was the chief of the robbers, Franquet d'Arras. It was proved before the bailiff and justices of Lagny that Franquet had not only been a thief, but a murderer, and he was consequently condemned to die. Joan of Arc wished that he should be exchanged for a French prisoner, but this French prisoner had meanwhile died. The justices of Lagny insisted on having their sentence carried out, to which Joan at length unwillingly gave way, and Franquet met with his deserts. We cannot see how the Maid was to blame in this affair; but this thing was one of the accusations which helped to bring her to the stake.

On the 17th of April the truce agreed to between King Charles and Burgundy came to an end. At this time the town of greatest strategical importance to Burgundy was that of Compagne. Holding Compagne, the Duke of Burgundy held 221

the key of France. King Charles, with his habitual carelessness, had been on the point of handing over Compagne to the Duke as a pledge of peace; and no doubt he would have done so had not the inhabitants protested. Charles then surrendered the town of Pont Sainte-Maxence to Burgundy instead of Compagne. But this sop did not at all satisfy the greedy Duke, whose mouth watered for Compagne, which he was determined to obtain by fair or by foul means. At Soissons the Duke had succeeded in gaining the Governor by a bribe, and had, through this bribe, obtained the place; and there is little

reason not to suppose that he was still more ready to offer a still greater bribe to obtain Compagne. The Governor of Compagne, Willam de Flavigny —a man very deeply suspected, writes Michelet of him—was not likely to refuse a bribe; and, as we shall see, he acted in a manner that has made the accusation of his treachery to his country and Joan of Arc almost a certainty.

It was to prevent, if possible, Compagne falling into the hands of Burgundy that Joan of Arc hastened to its defence. On the 13th of May she reached Compagne, where she was received with great joy by the citizens. The Maid lodged in the town with Mary le Boucher, wife of the Procureur of the King. At Compagne were some important Court officals—the Chancellor Regnault de Chartres, no friend to Joan as we have seen, Vendume, and others. The country around and the places of armed strength were all in the occupation of the English and Burgundans; near Noyon, the town of Pont-l'EvÍque was in the possession of the English. This place Joan of Arc attacked, and she was on the point of capturing it when a strong force of Burgundans arrived from Noyon, and Joan had to beat a retreat on Crecy. On the 23rd of May, news reached Joan that Compagne was threatened by the united English and Burgundan forces, under the command of the Duke and the Earl of Arundel. By midnight of that day, Joan of Arc was back again in Compagne. She had been warned of the danger of passing, to gain the town, through the enemies'

lines with so small a company.

'Never fear!' she answered, 'we are enough. I must go and see my good friends at Compagne.'

These words have been approprately placed on the pedestal of the statue of the heroine in front of the HUtel de Ville in Compagne.

By sunrise all her troopers were within the town: not a man was missing.

Compagne was a strongly fortified place, resting on the left bank of the river Oise, across which, as at Orleans, one long stoutly defended bridge connected the right bank with the town. In front of the bridge was one of those re-

doubts which were in those days called ‘boulevards.’ This boulevard was surrounded by a wet moat or ditch connected with the principal bridge by a drawbridge, closed or opened from within at pleasure. The town was surrounded and protected by a broad and deep moat, filled from the river. Behind this moat rose the town walls, girt with strong towers at short intervals. On the right bank of the river extended a wide stretch of fertile meadow land, bounded on the northern horizon by the soft low-lying hills of Picardy. From the circuit of the walls across the plain the eye rested on the towns of Margny, of Clairvoix, and of Venette. The Burgundans were encamped at Margny and at Clairvoix; the English, under the command of Montgomery, were encamped at Venette.

The evening of the day on which she had arrived at Compagne (the 24th of May), Joan of Arc resolved to attack the Burgundans, both at Margny and also at Clairvoix. Her plan was to draw out the Duke of Burgundy, should he come to the support of his men at these places. As to the English at Venette, she trusted that Flavy with his troops at Compagne would prevent them from cutting her off after her attack on the Burgundans, and so intercepting her return to the town; but this unfortunately was the very disaster which occurred.

In front of the bridge the redoubts were filled by French archers to keep off any attack made by the English, and Flavy had placed a large number of boats filled with armed men, principally bowmen, in readiness along the river to receive their companions should they meet with a repulse in their attack on the Burgundans.

It was about five o’clock that afternoon when Joan of Arc rode out of Compagne at the head of five hundred horsemen and foot soldiers. Flavy remained within the town, of which he was Governor. The attack led by the Maid on Margny, with splendid impetuosity, proved a complete success, and the enemy fled for shelter to their companions at Clairvoix. Here the resistance made was far more stubborn. While the French and Burgundans were combating in the meadows at Clairvoix, the English came from Venette to the assistance of their allies, and attacked the French in their rear. A panic was created by this attack among the French troops, and a sauve qui peut

ensued, both foot and horse dashing back in confusion towards Compagne, and when they reached the river either taking refuge in the boats or on the redoubts near the bridge. Mixed among this panic-stricken crowd of fugitives came the English in hot pursuit, followed by the Burgundans.

Carried away by the throng of frightened soldiers, Joan was among the last to leave the field, and to those who cried to her to make her escape she answered 223

that all might yet be saved, and urged her men to rally. Nevertheless, she was forced back towards the bridge, across which fugitives were making their escape into the town. In a few seconds Joan could have been safe across the drawbridge, and under shelter of the towers which defended it. At this instant, whether intentionally to exclude the heroine from safety, or through panic and fear of the Burgundans and English entering the town along with the French, the drawbridge was lifted, and Joan, with a handful of the faithful few who were ever at her side in time of peril, was surrounded by a sea of foemen. In a moment half a dozen soldiers secured her horse and seized her on every side, trying to drag her out of the saddle. The long skirts which the heroine wore were soon torn off by these rough hands. An archer of Picardy, belonging to the army of John of Luxembourg, wrenched her from her horse and made her prisoner. Her brother Peter, her faithful squire d'Aulon, and Pothon de Xaintrailles were all captured at the same time.

Thus fell Joan of Arc into the hands of her enemies, and the question whether through treachery or not has never been settled.

According to an old work published early in the sixteenth century, called Le Miroir des Femmes Vertueuses, Joan of Arc had taken the communion in the Church of Saint James at Compagne, and was standing leaning against a pillar of that church; a large number of citizens with many children stood around, to whom she said: 'My children and dear friends, I bid you to mark that I have been sold and betrayed, and that I shall be shortly put to death. So I beseech you all to pray to God for me, for never more shall I be able to be of service to the King or to the kingdom of France.'

This story, which, whether authentic or not, is surely a touching one, is full of the spirit of the heroine. It rests upon the testimony of two persons, one eighty-six and the other eighty-eight years of age, by whom the author was told the tale in 1498, both affirming that they had been in the church when Joan of Arc spoke of her betrayal. There can be but little doubt that Joan had had for some time before she went to Compagne a presentiment of her soon falling into her enemies' power.

On the eve of the King's coronation at Rheims she said to her friends that what she alone feared was treason—a foreboding too soon, alas! to come true. She never, however, seems to have fixed on any particular period when the treason she dreaded would occur; and during her tral she acknowledged that, had she known she would have been taken prisoner during the sortie on the 24th of May, she would not have undertaken that adventure.

One of her best historans, M. Wallon, thinks that the words which she is supposed to have spoken to the people in the Church of Saint James at Compagne 224

were owing to her discouragement at not having, a few weeks previously, been able to cross the river Aisne at Soissons, and thus finding herself prevented from attacking the Duke of Burgundy at Choisy, and thence having been obliged to return to Compagne. Wallon points out that in coming to defend Compagne, Joan of Arc came entirely at her own instigation, and that during the previous six months Flavy had defended Compagne against the English and Burgundans with success and energy; nay more, that, in spite of bribes from the Duke of Burgundy, Flavy contrived to hold the town till the close of the war.

On the other side, a recent writer of the heroine's life, especally as regarded from a military standpoint, M. Marin, gives at great length his reasons for believing in the treachery of Flavy. M. Marin points out that, in the first place, Flavy's character was a notoriously bad one; secondly, that he was very possibly under the influence of both La Tremoille and the Chancellor Regnault de Chartres, bitter opponents, as we have already shown, of the Maid; thirdly, that it was in Flavy's interest that the prestige of saving

Compagne from the Burgundans and English should be entirely owing to his own conduct; and fourthly, that he, Flavy, with the majority of the French officers, was affected against Joan of Arc since the execution of Franquet d'Arras. M. Marin goes on to prove that Joan of Arc might have been rescued without difficulty, and that the enemy could not have forced their way into the town alongside of the retreating French, unless they were ready to be cut up as soon as they had come within its walls. M. Marin's opinion, having the authority of a soldier, carries weight with it; and his opinion is that Joan of Arc was deliberately betrayed by Flavy, and purposely allowed to fall into the hands of her enemies.

The names of La Tremoille and Regnault de Chartres should also be pilloried by the side of that of Flavy—the two great courtiers who held the ear of the King, and who had always plotted against Joan of Arc. As has already been said, it was Regnault de Chartres who had the effrontery to announce the news of Joan of Arc's capture to the citizens of Rheims as being a judgment of Heaven upon her.

She had, this mean prelate said, offended God by her pride, and in wearing rich apparel, and in having preferred to follow her own will rather than that of God!

Verily, and with reason, might poor Joan have prayed to be delivered from such friends as those creatures and courtiers about her King, for whom she had done and suffered so much.

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The archer who had captured Joan of Arc was in the pay of the Bastard of Wandome, or Wandoune, and this Wandome was himself in the service of John de 225

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Ligny, a vassal of the Duke of Burgundy, and a cadet of the princely house of Luxembourg. Like most younger sons, John de Ligny was badly off, and the tempta-tion of the English reward in exchange for his prisoner, whose

escape he greatly feared, overtopped any scruples he may have felt in receiving this blood-money.

The historan Monstrelet tells us he was present when Joan of Arc was brought into the Burgundan camp, at Margny, and before the Duke of Burgundy. But the old chronicler relates nothing with regard to that eventful meeting; only he is eloquent on the joy caused by the capture of the Maid of Orleans among the English and their allies; and he tells us that in their opinion Joan's capture was equal by itself to that of five hundred ordinary prisoners, for they had feared her, he adds, more than all the other French leaders put together. Of the high opinion held by her enemies of the Maid's influence, one could not ask for a more remarkable proof than this testimony, coming as it does from a partisan of her foes.

After three days passed at Margny, Joan of Arc was taken, for greater security, by Luxembourg to the castle of Beaulieu, in Picardy.

The news of Joan's capture soon reached Paris, and within a few hours of that event becoming known, the Vicar-General of the Order of the Inquisition sent a letter to the Duke of Burgundy, accompanied by another from the University of Paris, praying that Joan of Arc might be delivered up to the keeping of Mother Church as a sorceress and idolatress. That terrible engine, the Inquisition, had, like some mighty reptile scenting its prey near, slowly unfolded its coils. Whether Bedford had or had not caused these letters to be sent the Duke is not known, but the Regent had both in the Church and the University of Paris the men he wanted—

instruments by whom his vengeance could be worked on Joan of Arc; and he had the astuteness to see that in calling in the aid of the Church, and treating Joan of Arc as a heretic and witch, the rules of war could be laid aside. What no civilised body of men could do, namely, kill a prisoner of war, that thing could be done in the name and by the authority of the Church and its holy office; and in the Bishop of Beauvais, the inexorable Cauchon, Bedford had the tool necessary to his hand whereby this dastardly plot could be carried out.

The first move that Bedford now was obliged to take was to secure the victim; and in order to do so the Bishop of Beauvais was applied to. The

name of Peter Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, will go down to the latest posterity with the execration of humanity, for the part he played in the tragedy of the worst of judical murders of which any record exists. Let us give even the devil his due. According to Michelet the Bishop was 'not a man without merit,' although the historan does not say in what Cauchon's merit consisted. Born at Rheims, he had been considered a 226

learned priest when at the University of Paris; but he had the reputation of being a harsh and vindictive opponent to all who disagreed with his views, within or without the Church. He was forced to leave Paris, in 1413, for some misconduct. It was then that Cauchon became a strong partisan of the Duke of Burgundy. It was through the Duke that he obtained the See of Beauvais. The English also favoured Cauchon, and obtained for him a high post in the University of Paris. When the tide of French success reached Beauvais, in 1429, Cauchon was obliged to escape, and found shelter in England. There Winchester received him with cordality. While in England, Cauchon became a thorough partisan of the English, and the humble servant of the proud Prince-Cardinal. Winchester promised Cauchon preferment, and, when the See of Rouen fell vacant, recommended the Pope to place Cauchon on its throne. The Pope, however, refused his consent, and the Rouen Chapters would hear naught of the Anglicised Bishop. At that time the Church at Rouen was at war with the University of Paris, and did not wish one of the members of that University placed over it.

Joan of Arc's place of capture happened to be in the diocese of Beauvais, and although Cauchon was now only nominally Bishop of Beauvais, he still retained that title. Cauchon now placed himself, body and soul, at the disposal of the English, hoping thereby sooner to obtain the long-coveted Archbishopric of Rouen in exchange for helping his friends to the utmost in his power by furthering their schemes and in ridding them of their prisoner once and for ever. The bait held out by Winchester and Bedford was the Archbishopric of Rouen, and eagerly did Cauchon seize his prey. What added to his zeal was his wish to gratify base feelings of revenge on those who had thrust him out of his Bishopric of Beauvais, and on her without whose deeds he might have still been living in security in his palatal home there.

After a consultation with the leaders of the University of Paris, Cauchon arrived at the Burgundan camp before Compagne on the 14th of July, and claimed Joan of Arc as prisoner from the keeping of the Duke of Burgundy. Cauchon justified his demand by letters which he had obtained from the doctors of the University, and he made the offer in the name of the child-king of England. The sum handed over for the purchase of the prisoner was 10,000 livres tournois, equivalent to 61,125 francs of French money of to-day—about £2400 sterling. This was the ordinary price in that day for the ransom of any prisoner of high rank. Luxembourg, to his shame and that of his order, consented to the sale on those terms, and Cauchon soon returned with the news of his bargain to his English employ-ers.

The whole transaction sounds more like what one might expect to have 227

occurred amongst an uncivilised nation rather than among a people who prided themselves on their chivalry and their usages of fair-play in matters relating to warfare. That a high dignitary of the Church, and a countryman of Joan of Arc, should have bought her from a prince, the descendant of emperors and kings, also a countryman of the heroic Maid's, for English gold, is bad enough; and that the so-called 'good' Duke of Burgundy should have been a silent spectator of the infamous transaction, brands all the actors as among the most sordid and meanest of individuals. But what is infinitely worse is the fact that no steps appear to have been taken by Charles to rescue the Maid, or to attempt an exchange of her for any other prisoner or prisoners.

Thus Joan of Arc, bound literally hand and foot, was led like a lamb to the shambles, not a hand being raised by those for whom she had done such great and noble deeds.

The University of Paris, whose decisions carried so great a weight in the issue of the trial of the Maid of Orleans, consisted at this period of an ecclesastical body of doctors; but as far as its attributes consisted it was a body secular, and holding an independent position owing to its many privileges. The University was a political as well as an ecclesastical body, supreme under the Pope above the whole of the Gallican Church. Although

divided into two parties through the war then raging between England and France, its judicature was greatly influenced by the Church. It was a matter of certainty that the Doctors of Theology who sat in the University of Paris, and who were all, or nearly all, French by birth, would favour the English, and give an adverse decision to that of those French ecclesastics who had examined into Joan's life and character when assembled at Poitiers, and who then considered her to be acting under the influence and with the protection of the Almighty.

As a prisoner, Joan of Arc's behaviour was as modest and courageous as it had been in her days of success and liberty. In the first times of her durance, d'Aulon, who, as we mentioned, had been captured at the same time, appears to have been allowed to remain with her. On his telling her that he feared Compagne would now probably be taken by the enemy, Joan of Arc said such a thing could not occur, 'For all the places,' she added, 'which the King of Heaven has placed in the keeping of King Charles by my means will never again be retaken by his enemies, at any rate as long as he cares to keep them.'

Although willing to endure for the sake of her beloved country all the cruelty her enemies could inflict upon her, Joan was most anxious to return in order to continue her mission. While in the castle of Beaulieu she made a desperate 228

attempt to escape. She managed to squeeze herself between two beams of wood placed across an opening in her prison, and was on the point of leaving her dungeon tower when one of the jailers caught sight of her, and she was retaken. Probably in consequence of this attempt, Joan of Arc, after an imprisonment of four months at Beaulieu, was transferred thence by Ligny to his castle of Beaurevoir, near the town of Cambrai, a place far removed from the neighbourhood of the war, and consequently more secure than Beaulieu. At Beaurevoir lived the wife and the aunt of Ligny; they showed some attention and compassion to the prisoner. They offered her some of their dresses, and tried to persuade her to quit her male attire. Joan, however, refused: she gave as her reason for not complying with their request that the time had not yet arrived for her to cease wearing the clothes

she had worn during the time of her mission. That she had good reason not to don woman's attire even when at Beaurevoir, and keep to her male attire as a protection, is probable, as she was not safe from wanton insult at the hands of the rough soldiery placed about her person. This clinging to her male dress, we shall see, under similar circumstances at Rouen, was the principal indictment made against her by her executioners.

At Beaurevoir Joan of Arc was placed in a chamber at the top of a high tower, whence Ligny thought that no attempt at escape would be made, but Joan of Arc tried once again to recover her liberty. In the course of her tral she told her judges how her voices counselled her not again to make this venture, and of her perplexity whether she should obey them, or, at the risk of her life, escape from the clutches of the English, for at this time she knew that she had been sold to her bitterest foes.

What appears to have determined her decision was hearing that Compagne was in imminent peril of falling into the hands of the English, and that the inhabitants would be massacred. In her desperation, feeling, like young Arthur, that

'The wall is high; and yet will I leap down:— Good ground, be pitiful, and hurt me not!... As good to die, and go, as die, and stay'

she knotted some thongs together and let herself out of a window; but the thongs broke, and she fell from a great height—the tower is supposed to have been no less than sixty feet high. She was found unconscious at its foot, and for several days she was not expected to recover from the injuries she had received.

But she was doomed for a far more terrible death.

For several days Joan of Arc took no nourishment. Gradually she revived, and she told her jailers that her beloved Saint Catherine had visited and com-229

forted her; and she also told them that she knew Compagne would not be taken, and would be free from its enemies before the Feast of Saint Martin.

Beaurevoir is now a ruin: although above the lintel can still be seen the coat-of-arms of the jailer of the Maid, the tower in which she was imprisoned, and from which she so nearly met her death, has been destroyed.

In the month of November of that year (1430), in spite of the entreaties of his wife and aunt, Ligny delivered up his prisoner into the custody of the Duke of Burgundy, from whose keeping she was soon transferred into that of the English.

On the 20th of November the University of Paris sent a message to Cauchon, advising him to bring Joan of Arc before a tribunal. Cauchon, however, waited the arrival of Winchester, bringing with him his great-nephew, Henry VI. Winchester arrived with the boy-king on the 2nd of December. The Cardinal intended the function of the crowning of his great-nephew to be as imposing a ceremony as possible; and he also meant, by defaming the source of the French King's successes, to show the French people that Charles' coronation at Rheims had been brought about by what the Regent Bedford called a 'limb of the evil one.' It was, therefore, Bedford's plan that it should be declared before the world that Joan of Arc was inspired by Satanic agencies, and that consequently the French King's coronation was also due to these agencies. By similar means it would be made clear that all the French victories were owing to the same influence; for were it not, argued the English, they would be proved to have been themselves fighting against and defeated by—not the spirit of evil but—the spirit of righteousness.

Nothing, indeed, could be clearer than Winchester's argument. It was now only necessary that Joan of Arc should be at once placed on her tral as a sorceress and a witch—one who was in league with the evil one; and, when that had been satisfactorily proved, that she should publicly meet with the fate which a merciful Church had, in its infinite wisdom, ordained for such as she. Thus would the English army and people be avenged, and the French King's crown and prerogative suffer an irreparable damage.

From Beaurevoir, Joan of Arc was first taken to the town of Arras, thence to Crotoy, where, about the 21st of November, she was handed over to the English.

A chronicler of that day writes that the English rejoiced as greatly on that occasion as if they had received all the wealth of Lombardy. The Duke of Burgundy had never merited the title of 'Good,' which, somehow or other, has been linked with his name. Had he been the most virtuous of princes of any time, he yet 230

deserves to have his memory branded for the part he then took in the sale of Joan of Arc—a transaction whereof the poor excuse of not losing the benefits of his allance with the English avails nothing. For this, if nothing else, we reverse the good fame which lying history has accorded him.

In the underground portion of a tower at Crotoy, still to be seen, although the upper part has disappeared, facing the sea, is a door-way, which local tradition points out as that of the dungeon of Joan of Arc. Crotoy, or Le Crotoy, is on the coast of Picardy, a little to the north of Abbeville. In the fifteenth century it was a place of some warlike importance, especally to the English. Its situation near the coast, and the strength of its fortress, made Le Crotoy one of the principal places on the sea line, whence stores and war provender could be carried into France.

Le Crotoy had fallen into possession of the English through the marrage of Henry III. with Eleanor of Castille, Countess of Ponthieu, of which Crotoy formed a part.

During the hundred years' war, the port could receive vessels of considerable tonnage; and from this point the booty taken by the English could be shipped and sent across the Channel. Now but a few vestiges can be traced of its once strong and ably fortified castle. A few years ago, a statue, representing the Maid of Orleans in the garb of a prisoner, was placed near the ruins of the castle in which she passed most of the month of December, 1430.

At Crotoy, Joan of Arc was permitted to assist at the celebration of the Mass in the chapel of the castle; and while here she received a visit from some of her admirers from Abbeville—a few noble hearts who still remained loyal to the once all-powerful deliveress of their country, now a poor and abandoned prisoner on her road to a long imprisonment and a cruel death! Touched by this mark of sympathy from these Abbeville folk, Joan gave them, on parting from them, her blessing, and asked them to remember her in their prayers. The enlightened clergy and doctors, lay and spiritual, who formed the body known as the University of Paris, preferred that Joan of Arc should be sent to the capital, there to undergo her tral, and wrote to this effect to Bedford, through the name of the boy-king. They also despatched a letter to Cauchon (probably inspired by Bedford), in which they rated him for not bringing the Maid at once to her tral. They told him he was showing a lamentable laxness in not immedately punishing the scandals which had been committed under his jurisdiction against the Christan religion.

Paris was not considered enough of a safe place to take Joan of Arc into; the French lay too near its walls, and the loyalty of its citizens to the English was a doubtful quantity. Besides, it was not convenient that the University of Paris should be allowed the entire direction of the tral. It was well that the University should be made use of; but Cauchon relied on the Inquisition to carry out his and Bedford's 231

plan. Cauchon must be the principal agent and judge, and he felt, with Bedford, that they had a freer hand if the tral were to be at Rouen; therefore Rouen was decided on as the place of tral and punishment. Rouen, also, being in the midst of the English possessions, was perfectly safe from attack, should it occur to any of Joan of Arc's countrymen to attempt a rescue.

At the close of December Joan of Arc was taken across the river Somme, in a boat, to Saint Valery, and thence, strongly guarded, and placed on horseback, she was led along the Normandy coast by Eure and Dieppe to the place of her martyrdom. On arriving at Rouen it was seriously debated by some of her captors whether or not she should be at once put to death. They suggested her being sewn into a sack and thrown into the river! The reason these people gave for summarily disposing of Joan of Arc without form or

tral was that, as long as she lived, there was no security for the English in France. As has already been noticed, those who commanded and sided with the English were desirous that Joan of Arc should be first branded as a witch and a sorceress, both by the doctors of the Church and by the State, before being put to death.

Arrived at Rouen, Joan of Arc was immured in the old fortress built by Philip Augustus. One tower alone remains of the seven massive round towers which surrounded the circular castle. Her jailers had the barbarity to place their prisoner in an iron cage, in which she was fastened with iron rings and chains, one at the neck, another at the hands, and a third confining the feet. Joan was thus caged as if she were a wild animal until her tral commenced. After that, she was chained to a miserable truckle bed.

A chronicler of that time, named Macy, tells the following story of an incident which, for the sake of English manhood, one trusts is untrue. Among others who went to see Joan of Arc in her prison came one day the Earl of Warwick, with Lord Stafford and Ligny—Joan's former jailer. The latter told her in a jeering way that he had come to buy her back from the English, provided she promised never again to make war against them.

'You are mocking me,' said Joan of Arc. 'For I know that you have not the power to do that, neither the will.' And she added, 'I know well that these English will kill me, thinking that by doing so they will reconquer the kingdom of France; but even if there were one hundred thousand Godons more in France than there are now, they will never again conquer the kingdom!'

On hearing these words Stafford drew his dagger, and would have struck her had not Warwick prevented the cowardly act.

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Cauchon formed his tribunal of the following:—

1. John Graverent, a Dominican priest, D.D., Grand Inquisitor of France. It was he who appointed John LemaItre as judge in the tral of the Maid. The following July this Graverent preached a sermon in Paris, in which he glorified the death of Joan of Arc.

2. John LemaItre, who represented the Inquisition on the tral. He was a Dominican prior. He appears to have been a feeble-minded creature, and a mere tool of Cauchon and Graverent.

3. Martin Bellarme, D.D., another Dominican, and also a member of the Inquisition.

4. John d'Estivet, surnamed 'BEnEdicitE,' canon of Beauvais and Bayeux, was another of Cauchon's creatures. He acted the part of _Procureur-GEnEral_

during the tral. D'Estivet was a gross and cruel ecclesastic, and it is somewhat satisfactory to know his end. He was found dead in a muddy ditch soon after Joan of Arc's death. As M. Fabre justly says, 'He perished in his native element.'

5. John de la Fontaine, M.A. He was _Conseille d'Instruction_ during the tral. In the course of it he was threatened by Cauchon for having given some friendly advice to the prisoner, and escaped from Rouen before the conclusion of the tral.

6, 7, 8. Willam Manchon, Willam Colles, and Nicolas Taquel, all three recorders. They belonged to the Church. It is to Manchon that we are indebted for a summary of the most interesting account of the tral. We shall find that at the time of Joan's execution this man was horrified at the part he had taken in it. He confesses his horror at having received money for his

infamy, but instead of casting his blood-money at the feet of Cauchon, and hanging himself like another Judas, he somewhat naÔvely informs us that he laid it out in the purchase of a brevary in order to pray for the soul of the martyr.

9. Massieu, another priest, who acted as the sheriffs officer. He appears to have had feelings of humanity, and attended Joan to the end.

10. Louis de Luxembourg, Bishop of ThErouenne and the Chancellor of France to King Henry VI. This bishop was the go-between of Cauchon and Winchester throughout the tral; but he only appears to have taken part in these occa-233

sions during the examinations. It was he who was made Archbishop of Rouen, which post Cauchon had hoped to gain; and it was for this archbishopric that Cauchon had taken the presiding post during the tral.

11. John de Mailly, Bishop of Noyon; he was another staunch auxilary of Cauchon. In the year 1456, at the tral for the rehabilitation of Joan of Arc's memory, Mailly signed his name among those who condemned the deed he had helped to carry out.

12. Zanon de Castiglione, Bishop of Lisieux. One of the reasons that this man gave for condemning Joan of Arc to the stake was that she was born in too low a rank of life to have been inspired by God. This decision makes one wonder so aristocratic a prelate could demean himself by belonging to a religion which owed its origin to One who had followed the trade of a carpenter.

13. Philibert de Montjeu, Bishop of Coutances.

14. John de Saint AvEt, Bishop of Avranches. The latter was the only one of the above Bishops, Dominicans, and members of the French Church who gave his vote against the condemnation of Joan of Arc, although the tral minutes have not recorded the fact.

Besides the above French prelates, were:—

15. John Beaupare, M.A. and D.D., formerly a rector of the University of Paris, also a canon of BesanÁon. It was he who, with the following five representa-tives of the University of Paris, took the most prominent part in the cross-questioning of the prisoner.

16. Thomas de Courcelles, a canon of Amiens, of ThErouenne, and of Laon.

This person was employed to read the articles of accusation to the prisoner, and was in favour of employing torture to make Joan confess what was required of her by her prosecutors. He was considered one of the shining lights of the University of Paris. He died in 1469, and until the Revolution an engraved slab, on which his virtues and learning were recorded, covered his remains.

17. Gerard Feuillet. He was sent to Paris during the tral in order to lay the twelve articles of accusation before the University, and did not take part in the latter portion of the tral.

18. Nicolas Midi, D.D., a celebrated preacher. He is supposed to have been

the author of the twelve articles; and he it was who preached a sermon at the time of the execution of Joan of Arc. Attacked soon after by leprosy, he sufficiently recovered to see Charles VII. enter Paris; and he had the audacity to send the King an address of felicitation in the name of the faculties of the University by whose instrumentality Joan of Arc had been executed.

19. Peter Morice, a doctor of the University and a canon of Rouen. He was one of the most eager to bring Joan to the stake.

20. James de Touraine, also a doctor of the University, was violently hostile to Joan of Arc.

The above six doctors, with Cauchon, were those who had most to do with the proceedings of the tral, and those whose duty it was principally to question the prisoner.

21. Nicolas Loiseleur, M.A., a canon of Rouen; he was the most abject of all the gang of priests and doctors who formed part of this infamous tribunal. It was Loiseleur who, in the disguise of a layman, attempted to worm secrets from Joan, pretending to be her friend and sympathiser. When he found he gained nothing by the subterfuge, he resumed his clerical garb, and succeeded in getting, under the promise of secrecy from his order, a confession from the prisoner. He also introduced spies into the prison who took notes of Joan's words. When the idea was mooted of putting Joan of Arc to the torture, Loiseleur was one of the most urgent for it to be applied. However, on the day of the execution this man, who, strange as it may seem, appears to have had some kind of conscience, or at least to have been able to feel remorse for the base part he had played in the tral of the Maid, implored Joan of Arc's forgiveness. He, however, after the execution, helped Cauchon to spread calumnies regarding their victim. This infamous scoundrel died suddenly at Basle.

22. Raoul Roussel de Vernon, D.C.L., and the canon treasurer of the Cathedral of Rouen. He acted throughout the tral as reporter. In 1443 Roussel became Archbishop of Rouen.

23. Robert Barbier, also a D.C.L., and canon of Rouen Cathedral.

24. Nicolas Coppequesne, also a canon of Rouen Cathedral.

25. Nicolas de VenderAs, a canon of Rouen, and Cauchon's chaplain.

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26. John AlessEe, also a canon of Rouen. This AlessEe was greatly moved at the heroine's death, and exclaimed, 'I pray to God my soul may one day be where hers is now.'

27. Raoul Auguy, another canon.

28. Willam de Baubribosc, also a canon of Rouen.

29. John Brullot, another canon and precentor of Rouen.

30. John Basset, another canon and a M.A.

31. John Brullot, another canon. Besides these were seventeen others, named Caval, Columbel, Cormeilles, Crotoy, Duchemin, Dubesert, Garin, Gastinel, Ledoux, Leroy, Maguerie, Manzier, Morel, Morellet, Pinchon, Saulx, and Pasquier de Vaux, who became Bishop of Meaux, Evreux, and Lisieux. In all, nine-and-twenty canons of Rouen.

After these came a list of mitred abbots, priors, and heads of religious houses: Peter de Crique, Prior of Sigy; Willam Lebourg, Prior of the College of Saint LU of Rouen; Peter Migiet, Prior of Longueville.

After these priors came eleven abbots: Durement, Abbot of FEcamp, later Bishop of Coutances; Benel, Abbot of Courcelles; De Conti, Abbot of Sainte Catherine; Dacier, Abbot of Saint Corneille of Compagne; Frique, Abbot of Bee; Jolivet, Abbot of Saint Michael's Mount in Normandy; LabbE, Abbot of Saint George de Bocherville; Leroux, Abbot of Jumages; Du Masle, Abbot of Saint Ouen; Moret, Abbot of PrEaux; and Theroude, Abbot of Mortemer.

Besides these there were many doctors and assessors from the University of Paris; among the latter lot appears the name of an English priest, Willam Haiton, a secretary of Henry VI. He and Willam Alnwick, Bishop of

Norwich, Privy Seal to the English King, are the only two names belonging to the English clergy who took part in the tral. The Cardinal of Winchester never once appeared during the proceedings, although he was, together with Cauchon, the prime mover in the business. To complete the list of the other French clergy—French only by birth and nationality indeed—must be added the names of Chatillon, Archdeacon of Evreux; Erard, Canon of Langres, Laon, and Beauvais; Martin Ladvenu, a Dominican priest, one of the few who showed some humanity to the prisoner. It was Ladvenu who heard her confession on the day of her execution, and who after her death testified to her saintliness. Isambard de la Pierre, also a Dominican. Although 236

he voted for her death, de la Pierre showed signs of pity and compassion for his victim, and assisted her at her last moments. Testimony to her pure character was given by him in the time of her rehabilitation. Besides these were Emenyart, Fiexvet, Guerdon, Le FAvre, Delachambre, and Tiphanie, all of whom, with the exception of the last two, who were doctors of medicine, were members of the University. As we have already stated, out of this vast crowd of ecclesastics and a few laymen, only two Englishmen took part in the tral. But the immedate guard of the prisoner was composed of English soldiers—namely, of the following: John Gris, an English knight, one of Henry's bodyguard, who was in personal attendance on Joan of Arc; also John Berwoit (?) and Willam Talbot, subordinator to Gris. These men commanded a set of soldiers called houspilleurs, placed in the cell of the prisoner day and night. According to J. Bellow's pocket dictionary, the term houspilleur is derived from the old French term _houspiller_—Ang. 'to worry.'

And these fellows certainly carried out that meaning of the word.

If anything is needed to prove what an important case the English and those allied to them in France considered that of Joan of Arc, the great number of prelates and doctors assembled to judge her is sufficient to show. The doctors who had been summoned to attend the tral, and who had come to Rouen from Paris, were well paid by Winchester. Some of the receipts are still in existence. The Inquisition and Cauchon also received pay from the English Government.

Besides money, as we have said, Cauchon expected also to receive the Archbishopric of Rouen for his zeal in bringing Joan of Arc to the stake. Cupidity, lust of place and power, and fear of the enemies of the French were the principal motives which influenced these men, whose names should for ever be execrated.

In truth, a vulgar greed induced them to destroy one of the noblest creatures that had ever honoured humanity.

The *proces-verbal* and the minutes of the tral were written in Latin, and translated by Thomas de Courcelles; only a portion of the original translation has been preserved. There were three reporters who took notes during the tral—Manchon, Colles, and Taquel. The notes in Latin, written as the tral proceeded, were collected in the evenings, and translated into French by Manchon.

One difficult question arises—namely, are these notes to be relied on?

Manchon appears to have been honest in his writing, but Cauchon was not to be trifled with in what he wished noted, as the following instance will show. A sheriff's officer, named Massieu, was overheard to say that Joan of Arc had done nothing worthy of the death sentence. It was repeated to Cauchon, who threatened to have Massieu drowned. When Isambert de la Pierre advised Joan to submit herself to 237

the Council then holding meetings at Bâle, to which she assented, Cauchon shouted out, 'In the devil's name hold your peace!' On being asked by Manchon whether the prisoner's wish to submit her case to the Council at Bâle should be placed on the minutes of the tral, Cauchon roughly refused. Joan of Arc overhearing this, said, 'You write down what is against my interest, but not what is in my favour.' But we think the truth comes out, on the whole, pretty clearly; and we have in the answers of Joan to her judges, however much these answers may have been altered to suit Cauchon's views and ultimate object, a splendid proof of her presence of mind and courage. This she maintained day after day in the face of that crowd of enemies who

left no stone unturned, no subtlety of law or superstition disused, to bring a charge of guilt against her.

No victory of arms that Joan of Arc might have accomplished, had her career continued one bright and unclouded success, could have shown in a grander way the greatness of her character than her answers and her bearing during the entire course of her examinations before her implacable enemies, her judical murderers.

After holding some preliminary and private meetings, in which Cauchon, with some of the prelates, drew up a series of articles of indictment against the prisoner, the first public sitting of the tribunal took place in the chapel of the castle, in the same building in which Joan was imprisoned.

This was on the 21st of February, 1431. As we have said, from the day of her arrival in Rouen, at the end of December of the previous year, till this 21st day of February, Joan had been kept in an iron cage—a martyrdom of fifty days' daily and nightly torture. During the tral her confinement was less barbarous, but she was kept chained to a wooden bed, and the only wonder is that she did not suc-cumb to this barbarous imprisonment. We shall see that she fell seriously ill, and the English at one time feared she would die a natural death, and defeat their object of having her exposed and destroyed as a witch and a heretic.

On the day before the meeting of the tribunal, Cauchon sent summonses for all the judges to attend. Joan of Arc had meanwhile made two demands, both of which were refused. One was, that an equal number of clergy belonging to the French party should form an equal number in the tribunal to those of the English faction. The other demand was that she should be allowed to hear Mass before appearing before the tribunal.

At eight in the morning of Wednesday, the 21st of February, Cauchon took his seat as presiding judge for the tral about to commence. Beneath him were 238

ranged forty-three assessors—there were ninety-five assessors in all who took part in the tral. On the public days their numbers varied from between forty to sixty.

The prisoner was led into the chapel by the priest Massieu. Cauchon opened the proceedings with the following harangue:—

'This woman,' he said, pointing to Joan of Arc, 'this woman has been seized and apprehended some time back, in the territory of our diocese of Beauvais.

Numerous acts injurious to the orthodox faith have been committed by her, not merely in our diocese, but in many other regions. The public voice which accuses her of such crimes has become known throughout Christendom, and quite recently the high and very Christan Prince, our lord the King, has delivered her up and given her in our custody in order that a tral in the cause of religion shall be made, as it seemeth right and proper. For as much in the eyes of public opinion, and owing to certain matters which have come to our knowledge'—(Cauchon here refers to the information that he sought to obtain from Domremy: as nothing could be learnt there but what redounded to Joan of Arc's credit, no further use was made of the information by the Bishop)—'we have, with the assistance of learned doctors in religious and civil law, called you together in order to examine the said Joan, in order that she be examined on matters relating to faith. Therefore,' he continued, 'we desire in this tral that you fill the duty of your office for the preservation and exaltation of the Catholic faith; and, with the Divine assistance of our Lord, we call upon you to expedite these proceedings for the welfare of your consciences, that you speak the plain and honest truth, without subterfuge or concealment, on all questions that will be made you touching the faith. And in the first place we call upon you to take the oath in the form prescribed. Swear, the hands placed on the Gospels, that you will answer the truth in the questions that will be asked you.'

The latter words the Bishop had addressed to Joan; who answered that she knew not on what Cauchon would question her. 'Perhaps,' she said, 'you will ask me things about which I cannot answer you.'

‘Will you swear,’ said Cauchon, ‘to tell the truth respecting the things which will be asked you concerning the faith, and of which you are cognisant?’

‘Of all things regarding my family, and what things I have done since coming into France, I will gladly answer; but, as regards the revelation which I have received from God, I have never revealed to any one, except to Charles my King, and I will never reveal these things, even if my head were to be cut off, because 239

my voices have ordered me not to confide these things to any one save the King.

But,’ she continued, ‘in eight days’ time I shall know whether or not I may be allowed to tell you about them.’

Cauchon then repeated his question to the prisoner, namely, whether she would answer any questions put to her regarding matters of faith, and the Gospels were placed before her. The prisoner, kneeling, laid her hands upon them, and swore to speak the truth in what was asked her as regarded matters of faith.

‘What is your name?’ asked Cauchon.

J.—’In my home I was called Jeannette. Since I came to France I was called Joan. I have no surname.’

C.—’Where were you born?’

J.—’At Domremy, near Greux. The principal church is at Greux.’

C.—’What are your parents’ names?’

J.—’My father’s name is James d’Arc; my mother’s, Isabella.’

C.—’Where were you baptized?’

J.—’At Domremy.’

Cauchon then asked her the names of her god-parents, who baptized her, her age (she was about nineteen), and what her education amounted to.

‘I have learnt,’ Joan said, in answer to the last question, ‘from my mother the Paternoster, the Ave Mara, and the Belief. All that I know has been taught me by my mother.’

Cauchon then called upon her to repeat the Lord’s Prayer.

In trals for heresy the prisoners had to repeat this prayer before the judges.

At the commencement of Joan of Arc’s tral the crime of magic was brought against her, but as Cauchon completely failed to find any evidence for such a charge against his prisoner, he altered the charge of magic into one of heresy. It was probably supposed that a heretic would be unable to repeat the prayer and the creed, being under dabolic influence.

Joan of Arc then asked whether she might make her confession before the tribunal. Cauchon refused this request, but told her that he would send some one to whom she might confess. He then warned her that if she were to leave her prison she would be condemned as a heretic. Considering the way she was chained to her cell, it sounds strange that Cauchon should fear her flight.

'I have never,' the Maid said, 'given my promise not to attempt to escape if I can.'

'Have you anything to complain about?' asked the Bishop; and Joan then said how cruelly she was fastened by chains round her body and her feet. Probably, had she then promised not to escape from prison, this severity would have been relaxed, but Joan of Arc had not the spirit to stoop to her persecutors; she would not give her word not to get free if she could. 'The hope of escape is allowed to every prisoner,' she bravely said.

At the close of the sitting, John Gris, the English knight who had the chief charge over the prisoner, with the two soldiers Berwoit and Talbot, were called, and took an oath not to allow the prisoner to see any one without Cauchon's permission, and to strictly guard the prisoner. And with that the first day's tral ended.

Manchon, in his minutes on the day's proceedings, says that shouts and interruptions interfered with the reporters and their notes, and that Joan of Arc was repeatedly interrupted. Cauchon had placed some of his clerks behind the tapestry in the depth of a window of the chapel, whose duty it was to make a garbled copy of Joan of Arc's answers to suit the Bishop.

Possibly finding the chapel of the castle too small for the number of people present at the tral, the next meeting of the judges was held in a different place, more suitable—namely, in the great hall of the castle. That second

day's tral took place on the 22nd of February. The tribunal consisted of Cauchon and forty-seven assessors.

Cauchon commenced the proceedings by introducing John LemaItre, vicar of the Inquisition, to the judges, after which Joan was brought into the hall —a splendid chamber used on happier occasions for festivities and Court pageants.

Cauchon again commanded the prisoner to take the oath, as on the first day's tral. She said that she had already once sworn to speak nothing but the truth, and that that should suffice. Cauchon still insisted, and again Joan replied that as 241

far as any question was put to her regarding faith and religion she had promised to answer, but that she could not promise more, and Cauchon failed to get anything more from her.

The Bishop then applied to one of the doctors of theology to examine and cross-question the prisoner. This man's name was Beaupare.

B.—'In the first place, Joan, I will exhort you to tell the truth, as you have sworn to do, on all that I may have to ask you.'

J.—'You may ask me questions on which I shall be able to answer you, and on others about which I cannot. If you were well informed about me you should wish me out of your power. All that I have done has been the work of revelation.'

B.—'How old were you when you left your home?'

J.—'I do not exactly know.'

B.—'Did you learn any trade at home?'

J.—'Yes, to sew and to spin, and for that I am not afraid to be matched by any woman in Rouen.'

B.—'Did you not once leave your father's house before you left it altogether?'

J.—'We left for fear of the Burgundans, and I once left my father's house and went to Neufchateau in Lorraine, to visit a woman named La Rousse, where I remained for fifteen days.'

B.—'What was your occupation when at home?'

J.—'When I was with my father I looked after the household affairs, and I went but seldom with the sheep and cattle to the fields.'

B.—'Did you make your confession every year?'

J.—'Yes, to my curate, and when he was prevented hearing it, to another priest, with my curate's permission. I think on two or three occasions I have confessed to mendicant frars. That happened at Neufchateau. I took the Communion at Easter.'

A MISSION FROM GOD

B.—'Have you received the Eucharist at other festivals besides that of Easter?'

Joan of Arc said that what she had already told regarding this question was sufficient.

'_Passez outre_' is the term she used, not an easy one to translate. Perhaps

'that will suffice' is like it.

Beaupare now began questioning Joan of Arc regarding 'her voices,' and one can imagine how eagerly this portion of the prisoner's examination must have been listened to by all present.

'When did you first hear the voices?' asked Beaupare.

'I was thirteen,' answered Joan, 'when I first heard a voice coming from God to help me to live well. That first time I was much alarmed. The voice came to me about mid-day; it was in the summer, and I was in my father's garden.'

'Had you been fasting?' asked Beaupare.

J.—'Yes, I had been fasting.'

B.—'Had you fasted on the day before?'

J.—'No, I had not.'

B.—'From what direction did the voices come?'

J.—'I heard the voice coming from my right—from towards the church.'

B.—'Was the voice accompanied with a bright light?'

J.—'Seldom did I hear it without seeing a bright light. The light came from the same side as did the voice, and it was generally very brillant. When I came into France I often heard the voices very loud.'

B.—'How could you see the light when you say it was at the side?'

To this question Joan gave no direct answer, but she said that when she was in a wood she would hear the voices coming towards her.

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A MISSION FROM GOD

'What,' next asked Beaupare, 'what did you think this voice which manifested itself to you sounded like?'

J.—'It seemed to me a very noble voice, and I think it was sent to me by God. When I heard it for the third time I recognised it as being the voice of an angel.'

B.—'Could you understand it?'

J.—'It was always quite clear, and I could easily understand it.'

B.—'What advice did it give you regarding the salvation of your soul?'

J.—'It told me to conduct myself well, and to attend the services of the Church regularly; and it told me that it was necessary that I should go to France.'

B.—'In what manner of form did the voice appear?'

J.—'As to that I will give you no answer.'

B.—'Did that voice solicit you often?'

J.—'It said to me two or three times a week, "Leave your village and go to France."'

B.—'Did your father know of your departure?'

J.—'He knew nothing about it. The voice said, "Go to France," so I could not remain at home any longer.'

B.—'What else did it say to you?'

J.—'It told me that I should raise the siege of Orleans.'

B.—'Was that all?'

J.—'The same voice told me to go to Vaucouleurs, to Robert de Baudricourt, captain of that place, and that he would give me soldiers to accompany me on my journey; and I answered it, that I was a poor girl who did not know how to ride, neither how to fight.'

A MISSION FROM GOD

B.—'What did you do then?'

J.—'I went to my uncle, and told him that I wished to remain with him for some time, and I lived with him eight days. I then told him that I must go to Vaucouleurs, and he took me there. When I arrived there I recognised Robert de Baudricourt, although it was the first time that I saw him.'

B.—'How, then, did you recognise him?'

J.—'I knew him through my voices. They said to me, "This is the man," and I said to him, "I must go to France." Twice he refused to listen to me. The third time he received me. The voices had told me this would happen.'

B.—'Had you not some business with the Duke of Lorraine?'

J.—'The Duke ordered that I should be brought to him. I went and said to him, "I must go to France." The Duke asked me how he should recover his health.

I told him I knew nothing about that.'

B.—'Did you speak much to him about your journey?'

J.—'I told him very little about it. But I asked him to allow his son, with some soldiers, to go to France with me, and that I should pray God to cure him. I had gone to him with a safe conduct. After leaving him I returned to Vaucouleurs.'

B.—'How were you dressed when you left Vaucouleurs?'

J.—'When I left Vaucouleurs I wore a man's dress. I had on a sword which Robert de Baudricourt had given me, without any other arms. I was accompanied by a knight, a squire, and four servants. We went to the town of Saint Urban, and I passed that night in the abbey. On the way, we passed

through the town of Auxerre, where I attended mass in the principal church. At that time I heard my voices often, with that one of which I have already spoken.'

B.—'Tell me, now, by whose advice did you come to wear the dress of a man?'

Joan of Arc refused to answer, in spite of being repeatedly told to do so.

B.—'What did Baudricourt say to you when you left?'

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A MISSION FROM GOD

J.—'He made them who went with me promise to take charge of me, and as I left he said, "Go, and let come what may!"' (_Advienne que pourra!_) B.—'What do you know regarding the Duke of Orleans, now a prisoner in England?'

J.—'I know that God protects the Duke of Orleans, and I have had more revelations about the Duke than about any other person in the world, with the exception of the King.'

She was now again asked as to who it was who had advised her to wear male attire. She said it was necessary that she should dress in that manner.

'Did your voice tell you so?' was asked her.

'I believe my voice gave me good advice,' she answered.

B.—'What did you do on arriving at Orleans?'

J.—'I sent a letter to the English before Orleans. In it I told them to depart; a copy of this letter has been read to me here in Rouen. There are two or three sentences in that copy which were not in my letter. For instance, "Give back to the Maiden" should read, "Give back to the King." Also these words, "Troop for troop"

and "Commander-in-chief," which were not in my letters.'

In this Joan of Arc was mistaken, M. Fabre points out in his Life of the Maid of Orleans, the text being the same both in the original and in the copy of the letter.

B.—'When at Chinon, could you see as often as you wished him you call your King?'

J.—'I used to go whenever I wished to see my King. When I arrived at the village of Sainte Catherine de Fierbois, I sent a messenger to Chinon to the King.

We arrived about mid-day at Chinon, and lodged at an inn. After dinner I went to see the King at the castle.'

Either here Joan of Arc, or the reporter, which is more likely, makes a slip, as she did not see Charles till two days after her arrival at Chinon.

A MISSION FROM GOD

B.—'Who pointed out the King to you?'

J.—'When I entered the chamber I recognised the King from among all the others, my voices having revealed him to me. I told the King that I wished to go and make war on the English.'

B.—'When your voices revealed your King to you, were they accompanied by any light?'

Joan made no answer.

B.—'Did you see any angel above the figure of the King?'

'Spare me such questions,' pleaded Joan; but the Inquisitor was not to be so easily put off, and repeated the question again and again, until Joan said that the King had also seen visions and heard revelations.

'What were these revelations?' asked the priest.

This Joan refused to answer, and told Beaupare that he might, if he liked, send to Charles and ask him.

'Did you expect the King to see you?' then asked the priest.

Her answer was that the voice had promised her that the King would soon see her after her arrival.

'And why,' asked Beaupare, 'did he receive you?'

'Those on my side,' said Joan, 'knew well that I was sent by God; they have known and acknowledged that voice.'

'Who?' asked Beaupare.

‘The King and others,’ answered Joan, ‘have heard the voices coming to me. Charles of Bourbon also, and two or three others.’

(The Charles of Bourbon was the Count of Clermont.)

‘Did you often hear that voice?’ asked the priest.

‘Not a day passes that I do not hear it,’ Joan replied.

‘What do you ask of it?’ inquired Beaupare.

‘I have never,’ answered Joan, ‘asked for any recompense, except the salvation of my soul.’

‘Did the voice always encourage you to follow the army?’

‘The voice told me to remain at Saint Denis. I wished to remain, but against my will the knights obliged me to leave. I would have remained had I had my free-will.’

‘When were you wounded?’ asked Beaupare.

‘I was wounded,’ Joan answered, ‘in the moat before Paris, having gone there from Saint Denis. At the end of five days I recovered.’

‘What did you attempt to do against Paris?’

Joan answered that she had made one skirmish (*escarmouche*) in front of Paris.

‘Was it on a feast day?’ asked the priest.

‘It was,’ replied Joan. And on being asked if she considered it right to make an attack on such a day, she refused to answer.

It is plain that the gist of those questions made by Beaupare was to try and make Joan of Arc avow that her voices had given her evil counsel. On the following day the same tactics were pursued.

The third meeting of the tribunal was held on the 24th of February, in the same chamber. Sixty-two assessors were present. Again Cauchon

commenced by admonishing Joan to tell the truth on all subjects asked her, and again she protested that as far as her revelations were concerned she could give no answers.

On Cauchon insisting, she said, 'Take care what you, who are my judge, undertake, for you take a terrible responsibility on yourself, and you presume too far. It is enough,' she added, 'that I have already twice taken the oath.'

Upon her saying this, Cauchon lost all control, and he stormed and threat-

ened her with instant condemnation if she refused to take the oath.

'All the clergy in Paris and Rouen could not condemn me,' was the proud answer, 'if they had not the right to do so.' But, as on the previous occasions, she said she would willingly answer all questions relating to her deeds since leaving her home, but that it would take many days for her to tell them all. Wearied with the persistence and threats of her arch-tormentor, Cauchon, Joan said that she had been sent by God and wished to return to God. 'I have nothing more to do here,' she added.

Beaupare was again ordered to cross-examine the prisoner.

He began by asking her when she had last eaten.

'Not since yesterday at mid-day,' she said. (It was then Lent.) Beaupare then began again to question her regarding the voice. When had she last heard it?

'On the previous day,' Joan said, 'and also on that day too.'

'At what o'clock of the day before?'

Thrice she had heard the voice in the morning, and once at the hour of Vespers, and again when the Ave Mara was being sung.

'What were you doing,' asked Beaupare, 'when the voices called you?'

‘I was sleeping,’ answered Joan, ‘and the voice awoke me.’

‘Did it awake you by touching your arm?’

‘The voice awoke me without its touching me.’

‘Was it in your room?’

‘Not that I know, but it was in the castle.’

‘Did you acknowledge it by kneeling?’

‘I acknowledged its presence by sitting up and clasping my hands. I had 249

begged for its help.’

‘And what did it say to you?’

‘It told me to answer boldly.’

‘Tell us more clearly what it said to you.’

‘I asked its advice in what I should answer, and bade it ask the Saviour for counsel. And the voice said, “Answer boldly; God will help you.”’

‘Had it said anything to you before you interrupted it?’

‘Some words it had said which I did not clearly comprehend; but when fully awake I understood it to tell me to answer boldly.’ Then, emboldened as it seemed by the recollection of that voice, she turned to Cauchon and exclaimed, ‘You, Bishop, you tell me that you are my judge—have a care how you act, for in truth I am sent by God, and your position is one of great peril.’

Then Beaupare broke in again, and asked Joan of Arc if the voice had ever altered its advice, and whether it had told Joan not to answer all the questions that would be put to her.

‘I cannot answer you about that,’ said Joan. ‘I have revelations of matters concerning the King which I shall not reveal.’

The Maid then asked whether she might wait for fifteen days, in order that, by that time, she might know whether she might, or might not, answer questions relating to this point.

The priest then asked whether she knew that the voice came from God.

‘Yes,’ she answered, ‘and by this order—that,’ she continued, ‘I believe as firmly as I believe the Christan religion, and that God has saved us from the pains of hell.’

She was then asked if the voice was that of a male or of a female.

‘It is a voice sent by God,’ she only deigned to say to this.

Joan again asked for an interval of fifteen days, in order that she might bet-

ter be able in that time to know how much she might reveal to her judges relating to her voices.

On being asked whether she believed the Almighty would be displeased at her telling the whole truth, she said that she had been ordered by the voices to reveal certain things to the King, and not to her judges; that her voices had told her that very night many things for the good of the King which he alone was to know.

But, asked Beaupare, could she not prevail on the voices to visit the King?

‘I know not if the voices would consent,’ she answered.

‘But why,’ then asked Beaupare, ‘does the voice not speak to the King now, as it did formerly, when you were with him?’

‘I know not if it be the wish of God,’ Joan answered: ‘without the grace of God I should be able to do nothing.’

This remark, most innocent to our comprehension, was afterwards made use of as a weapon to accuse the prisoner of the charge of heresy.

Later on in the day Beaupare asked Joan if the voice had form and features.

This the prisoner refused to answer.

‘There is a saying among children,’ she said, ‘that one is sometimes hanged for speaking the truth.’

On being asked by Beaupare if she was sure of being in a state of grace—

a question to which he had carefully led up, and whereby Cauchon hoped to entrap her into a statement which might be used in the accusation of heresy he was now framing against Joan of Arc—her answer even disarmed the Bishop.

‘If I am not, may God place me in it; if I am already, may He keep me in it.’

When that test question had been put to the prisoner, one of the judges, guessing the object of its being made, expostulated, to Cauchon’s rage—who roughly bade him hold his peace.

To that triumphant reply Joan of Arc added these words: ‘If I am not in God’s grace I should be the most unhappy being in the world, and I do not think, were I 251

living in sin, that my voices would come to me. Would,’ she cried, ‘that every one could hear them as well as I do myself!’

Beaupare then asked her about her childhood, and when she had first heard the voices. Asked if there were many people at Domremy in favour of the Burgundans, she said she only knew of one individual. Then came a string of questions about the fairy-well, the haunted oak-tree. All these questions

Joan fully answered. She had never, she said, seen a fairy, nor had she heard the prophecy about the oak wood from which a maid was to come and deliver France. When asked if she would leave off wearing man's clothes, she said she would not, as it was the will of Heaven for her to wear them.

The fourth day of the tral was the 27th of February. Fifty-three judges were present. The usual attempt to make Joan take the oath was made to the prisoner by Cauchon, and she was again cross-examined by Beaupare. Again questioned as to her voices, she said that without their permission she could not say what they said to her relating to the King.

Asked if the voices came to her direct from God, or through some intermedary channel, she answered, 'The voices are those of Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret; they wear beautiful crowns—of this I may speak, for they allow me to do so.' If, she added, her words were doubted, they might send to Poitiers, where she had already been questioned on the same subject.

'How do you distinguish one from the other?' asked Beaupare.

'By the manner in which they salute me,' Joan answered.

'How long have they been in communication with you?'

'I have been under their protection seven years,' was the answer.

Joan had referred to the succour which she had received from Saint Michel.

On being asked which of these saints was the first to appear to her, she said it was the last named. She had seen him, she said, as clearly as she saw Beaupare, and that he was not by himself, but in a company of angels. When he left her she felt miserable, and longed to have been taken with the flight of angels.

When Beaupare asked her if it was her own idea to come into France, Joan replied in the affirmative, and also that she would sooner have been torn to pieces by horses than have come without the will of God.

A MISSION FROM GOD

‘Does He,’ asked the priest, ‘tell you not to wear the man’s dress? and had not Baudricourt,’ he added, ‘wished she should dress as a man?’

She said it was not by man’s but by God’s orders that she wore the dress of a man.

The questions again turned upon the vision and the voice.

Had an angel appeared above the head of the King at Chinon?

She answered that when she entered the King’s presence, three hundred soldiers stood in the hall, and fifty torches burnt in the great hall of the castle, and that without counting the spiritual light within.

She was then asked respecting her examination before the clergy at Poitiers.

‘They believed,’ Joan answered, ‘that there was nothing in me against matters of religion.’

Then Beaupare asked the prisoner if she had visited Sainte Catherine de Fierbois.

‘Yes,’ she answered; ‘I heard mass there twice in one day, on my way to Chinon.’

‘How did you communicate your message to the King?’

‘I sent a letter asking him if I might be allowed to see him. That I had come one hundred and fifty miles to bring him assistance, and that I had much to do for him. I think,’ she added, ‘that I also said I should know him amongst all those who might be present.’

‘Did you then wear a sword?’ asked Beaupare.

‘I had one that I had taken at Vaucouleurs.’

‘Had you not another one as well?’

‘Yes; I had sent to the church of Fierbois, either from Troyes or Chinon, for a sword from the back of the altar of Sainte Catherine. It was found, much rusted.’

A MISSION FROM GOD

‘How did you know there was a sword there?’

‘Through my voices. I asked in a letter that the sword should be given me, and the clergy sent me it. It lay underground—I am not certain whether at the front or at the back of the altar. It was cleaned by the people belonging to the church. They had a scabbard made for me; also one was made at Tours—one of velvet, the other of black cloth. I had also a third one for the Fierbois sword made of very strong leather.’

‘Were you wearing that sword,’ asked Beaupare, ‘when you were captured?’

‘No, I had not one then; I used to wear it constantly up to the time that I left Saint Denis, after the assault on Paris.’

‘What benediction did you bestow on that sword?’

‘None,’ said Joan; and she added, on being questioned as to her feeling about the sword, that she had a particular liking for it, from its having been found in the Church of Sainte Catherine, her favourite saint.

Then Beaupare inquired whether Joan was not in the habit of placing this sword on the altar, in order to bring it good luck.

Joan answered in the negative.

‘But then,’ the priest asked, ‘had she not prayed that it might bring her good fortune?’

‘It is enough to know,’ answered Joan, ‘that I wished my armour might bring me good fortune.’

‘What had become of the Fierbois sword?’ asked the priest.

‘I offered up at Saint Denis,’ answered Joan, ‘a sword and some armour, but not the Fierbois sword.’

‘Had you it when at Lagny?’ asked Beaupare.

‘Yes,’ answered the prisoner.

But between the time passed at Lagny and Compagne she wore another sword, taken from a Burgundan soldier, which she said was a good weapon, able to deal shrewd blows. But she would not satisfy Beaupare's curiosity as to what had become of the sword of Fierbois: 'That,' she said, 'has nothing to do with the tral.'

Beaupare next inquired as to what had become of Joan of Arc's goods.

She said her brother had her horses and her goods; she said she believed the latter amounted to some twelve thousand _Ecus_.

'Had you not,' asked the priest, 'when you went to Orleans, a banner or pennon? Of what colour was that?'

'My banner had a field all covered with _fleurs-de-lis_. In it was represented the world, with angels on either side. It was white, made of white cloth, of a kind called coucassin. On it was written Jesu Mara. It was bordered with silk.'

'Which were you fondest of?' asked Beaupare,—'your banner or your sword?'

'I loved my banner,' was the answer, 'forty times as much as I did my sword.'

'Who painted your banner?'

This Joan would not say.

'Who bore your flag?' asked the priest.

Joan of Arc said she carried it herself when charging the enemy, 'in order,'

she added, 'to avoid killing any one. I never killed any one,' she said.

‘How many soldiers did the King give you,’ asked the priest, ‘when he gave you a command?’

‘Between ten and twelve thousand men,’ answered Joan.

Then Beaupare questioned her regarding the relief of Orleans, and he was told by the Maid that she first went to the redoubt of Saint Loup by the bridge.

‘Did you expect,’ was the next question, ‘that you would be able to raise 255

the siege?’

‘Yes,’ she was certain, Joan answered, from a revelation which she had received, and of which she had told the King before making the expedition.

‘At the time of the assault,’ asked Beaupare, ‘did you not tell your soldiers that you alone would receive all the arrows, bolts, and stones discharged by the cannon and culverins?’

‘No,’ she answered, ‘there were over a hundred wounded; but,’ she added,

‘I said to my people, “Be assured that you will raise the siege.”’

‘Were you wounded?’ asked the priest.

‘I was wounded,’ Joan answered, ‘at the assault of the fortress on the bridge.

I was struck and wounded by an arrow or a dart; but I received much comfort from Saint Catherine, and I recovered in less than fifteen days. I recovered, and in spite of the wound I did not give up riding or working.’

‘Did you know beforehand that you would be wounded?’ asked Beaupare.

‘Yes,’ was the answer; ‘and I had told my King I should be wounded. My saints had told me of it.’

‘In what manner were you wounded?’ he asked.

‘I was,’ she answered, ‘the first to raise a ladder against the fortress at the bridge. While raising the ladder I was struck by the bolt.’

‘Why,’ now asked the priest, ‘did you not come to terms with the English captains at Jargeau?’

‘The knights about me,’ she answered, ‘told the English that they could not have a truce of fifteen days, which they wanted; but that they and their horses must leave the place at once.’

‘And what did you say?’

‘I told them that if they left the place with their side arms (_petites cottes_) their lives would be spared. If not, that Jargeau would be stormed.’

A MISSION FROM GOD

‘Had you then consulted your voices to know whether you should accord them that delay or not?’

Joan did not remember.

Here closed the fourth day’s tral.

The fifth day of the tral took place on the 1st of March. Fifty-eight judges were present.

The opening proceedings were the same as on the former occasions, and Joan of Arc again professed her willingness to answer all questions put to her regarding her deeds as readily as if she were in the presence of the Pope of Rome himself; but, as formerly, she gave no promise of revealing what her voices had told her.

Beaupare caught immedately at the opportunity of her having spoken of the Pope to lay a pitfall in her path: Which Pope did she believe the authentic one—he at Avignon or the one in Rome?

‘Are there two?’ she asked. This was an awkward question to those bishops and doctors of the faith who had for so long a time encouraged the schism in the Church.

Beaupare evaded the question, and asked her if it were true that she had received a letter from the Count of Armagnac asking her which of the two Popes he was bound to obey.

A copy of this letter was produced, as well as the one sent by Joan of Arc in reply.

When she sent her answer, the Maid said, she was about to mount her horse, and had told him she would be able better to answer his question when at

rest in Paris or elsewhere. The copy of her letter which was now read, Joan said, did not quite agree with that she had sent to Armagnac.

'She had not,' Joan added, 'said in her letter that what she knew was by the inspiration of Heaven.'

Again pressed as to which of the two Popes she believed the true one, she said that the one then in Rome was to her that one.

A MISSION FROM GOD

Questioned regarding her letter to the English before Orleans, she acknowledged the accurateness of the copy produced, with the exception of a slight mistake. She retracted nothing regarding this letter, and declared that the English would, ere seven years were passed from that time, give a more striking proof of their loss of power in France than that which they had shown before Orleans. This prediction was literally carried out when, in 1436, Paris opened its gates to Charles VII., the loss of the capital being shortly after followed by the loss of all the other English conquests, with the exception of the town of Calais—the gains of a century of war being snatched from them in a score of years.

'They will meet,' said Joan of Arc, 'with greater reverses than have yet befallen them.'

When she was asked what made her speak thus, she answered that these things had been revealed to her. The examination again turned upon her voices and apparitions.

'Do they always appear to you in the same dress? Always in the same form, and richly crowned?'

Similar foolish questions were then put to her. Had the saints long hair? She did not know. And what language did they converse in with her?

'Their language,' she replied, 'is good and beautiful.'

'What sort of voices were theirs?'

'They speak to me in soft and beautiful French voices,' she said.

'Does not Saint Margaret speak in English?'

'How should she,' was the answer, 'when she is not on the side of the English?'

‘Do they wear ear-rings?’

This Joan could not say; but the idiotic question reminded the prisoner that Cauchon had taken a ring from her. She had worn two—one had been taken by the Burgundans when she was captured, the other by the Bishop. The former had been given her by her parents, the latter by one of her brothers. This ring she 258

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asked Cauchon to give the Church.

‘Had she not,’ she was asked, ‘made use of these rings to heal the sick?’

She had never done so.

It is very easy throughout all these questionings to see how eager Cauchon and the other judges were to find some acknowledgment from the lips of Joan of Arc, upon which they could found a charge of heresy against her. Her visions were distorted by them into a proof of infernal agency; even the harmless superstitions of her village home did not escape being turned into idolatrous and infernal matters of belief.

Had not her saints, questioned the Bishop, appeared to her beneath the haunted oak of Domremy?—and what had they promised her besides the re-establishment of Charles upon the throne?

‘They promised,’ she answered, ‘to take me with them to Paradise, which I had prayed them to do.’

‘Nothing more?’ queried Cauchon.

‘If they made me another promise,’ Joan replied, ‘I am not at liberty to say what that promise is till three months are past.’

‘Did they say that you would be free in three months’ time?’

That question remained unanswered, but before those three months had passed, the heroine had been delivered by death from all earthly sufferings.

She was again minutely questioned regarding the superstitions of her country. Was there not growing there a certain fabulous plant, called Mandragora?

Joan of Arc knew nothing regarding such a plant—had never seen it, and did not know the use of it. Again the apparitions were brought forward.

'What was Saint Michel like? Was he clothed?'

'Do you think,' was the answer to this question, which could only have occurred to a foul-minded priest, 'do you think that God cannot clothe him?'

Other absurd questions followed—as to his hair; long or short? Had he a 259

pair of scales with him? As before, Joan of Arc answered these futile, and sometimes indecent, questions with her wonderful patience. At one moment she could not help exclaiming how supremely happy the sight of her saints made her; it seemed as if a sudden vision of her beloved saints had been vouchsafed her in the midst of that crowd of persecuting priests.

She was again told to tell what the sign or secret was which she had revealed to the King on first seeing him at Chinon; but about this she was firm as adamant, and refused to give any information. To reveal that sign or secret would, she felt, be not only a breach of confidence and disloyalty between her and her King, but a crime to divulge a sacred secret, which Charles kept sealed in his breast, and which she was determined to utter to no one, and least of all to his enemies.

'I have already said,' she told her judges, 'that you will have nothing from me about that. Go and ask the King!'

Then followed questions as to the fashion of the crown that the King had worn at Rheims: which brought the fifth day of the tral to a close.

The sixth and last day's public examination took place on the 3rd of March, forty-two judges present. The long series of questions were nearly all relating to the appearance of the saints. Both questions and answers were

nearly the same as on the previous occasions, and little more information was got from the prisoner.

After these, the subject of her dress—what she then wore, and what she had worn—was entered upon.

'When you came to the King,' she was asked, 'did he not inquire if your change in dress was owing to a revelation or not?'

'I have already answered,' said Joan, 'that I do not remember if he asked me. This evidence was made known when I was at Poitiers.'

'And the doctors who examined you,' asked Beaupare, 'at Poitiers, did they not want to know regarding your being dressed in man's clothes?'

'I don't remember,' she answered; 'but they asked me when I had first begun to wear man's dress, and I told them that it was when I was at Vaucouleurs.'

She was then asked whether the Queen had not asked her to leave off wear-

ing male clothes. She answered that that had nothing to do with the tral.

'But,' next inquired Beaupare, 'when you were at the castle of Beaurevoir, did not the ladies there ask you to do so?'

'Yes,' was the answer, 'and they offered to give me a woman's dress. But the time had not yet come.' She would, she added, have yielded sooner to the wishes of those ladies than to those of any other, the Queen excepted.

The subject of the flags and banners used by her during her campaigns was now entered on.

Had her standards not been copied by the men-at-arms?

'They did so at their pleasures,' she answered.

‘Of what materal was the banner made? If the poles were broken, were they renewed?’

‘They were,’ she answered, ‘when broken.’

‘Did you not,’ asked Beaupare, ‘say that the flags made like your banners were of good augury?’

‘What I said,’ answered Joan, ‘to my soldiers was, that they should attack the enemy with boldness.’

‘Did you not sprinkle holy water on the banners?’

To this question Joan refused to answer.

Next she was questioned about a certain Frar Richard, the preaching frar who had seen her at Troyes. She answered that he came to her making the sign of the Cross, and that she told him to come up to her without fear.

She was asked if it was true that she had pictures painted of herself in the likeness of a saint.

‘When at Arras,’ she answered, ‘she had seen a portrait of herself, in which she was represented kneeling before the King and presenting him with a letter.’

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‘But was there not a picture of you,’ asked Beaupare, ‘in your host’s house at Orleans?’

Joan of Arc knew nothing regarding such a picture.

‘Did you not know,’ was the next question put, ‘that your partisans had prayers and masses said in your honour?’

‘If they did so,’ she answered, ‘it was not by my wish; but if they prayed for me,’ she added, ‘there was no harm in so doing.’

She was then asked what her opinion was regarding the people who kissed her hands and her feet, and even her clothes. She answered that, inasmuch as she could, she prevented them doing so; but she acknowledged that the poor people flocked eagerly around her, and that she gave them all the assistance in her power.

She was next asked if she had not stood sponsor to some children baptized at Rheims.

‘Not at Rheims,’ she said; but she had for one child at Troyes. She had also stood sponsor for two children at Saint Denis, and she had gladly had the boy christened by the name of Charles in honour of the King, and the girl Joan, as it pleased their mothers.

‘Did the women not touch your rings and charms?’

‘Many,’ she answered, ‘were wont to touch both my hands and my rings; but I know not with what intention.’

‘Did she not receive the sacrament and confess herself as she passed through the country?’

‘Often,’ she answered.

‘And did you,’ asked the priest, ‘receive the sacrament in your male attire?’

‘Yes,’ she said; ‘but not, if I recollect right, when wearing my armour.’

This confession of having received the Eucharist in her male dress was made one of the accusations of sacrilege by Joan of Arc’s judges.

She was next questioned about a horse she had bought from the Bishop of Senlis, and ridden in battle.

The next point related to the supposed miraculous resurrection—a very temporary one however—of an infant three days old at Lagny. When Joan was in that place, this child appeared to have died, and was put before the image of the Virgin, in front of which some young women were kneeling. Joan of Arc joined them in their prayers, upon which it was noticed that the supposed dead infant gave some signs of life; he or she was baptized, and soon after expired. Joan of Arc had never for a moment supposed that it was owing to her presence and her prayers that this miracle had occurred.

'But,' asked Beaupare, 'was it not the common talk of the town of Lagny that you had performed this miracle, and had been the means of restoring the infant to life?'

'I did not inquire,' she said.

She was then asked about the woman, Catherine de la Rochelle, whom, it may be remembered, Joan had discovered to be a vulgar impostor, and whom she had tried to dissuade from making people believe that she could discover hidden treasures, advising her to return to her husband and her children.

Next she was asked why she had tried to escape from her prison tower at Beaurevoir. She said that she had made the attempt, although against the warning of her voices, which had counselled her to have patience—but that Saint Catherine had comforted her after her fall from the tower, telling her that she would recover, and also that Compagne would not be taken.

It was tried to prove that in order not to fall into the hands of the enemy she intended committing suicide. To this accusation she answered:—

‘I have already said that I would sooner give up my soul into God’s keeping, than fall into the hands of the English.’

And with this ended the sixth and last public day of the heroine’s tral.

Joan of Arc’s judges had found nothing to attach guilt to her in any of her replies; but as she had been condemned before the farce was enacted of trying her, her innocence could not save her life. As Michelet observes, Joan of Arc’s answers may have had some effect in touching the hearts of even such men as 263

were her judges; and it was perhaps on this account that Cauchon thought it more prudent to continue holding the tral with only a few, and those few picked men, of whose sympathies, characters, and feelings he was sure. The Bishop’s ostensible reason in having the tral henceforth carried on in private was in order ‘not to tire the others.’ A most thoughtful and tender-hearted Bishop! The details of the tral were now placed in the hands of two judges and two witnesses. Cauchon now felt he had a free hand. On the 12th of March he had obtained the permission of the Grand Inquisitor of the Holy Office in France to make use of the services of his Vicar-General—his name, as has already been said, was John LemaItre.

The first of the long series of secret interrogations was held in Joan of Arc’s prison—probably in the principal tower—on the 10th of March.

John de la Fontaine questioned the prisoner as follows:—

‘When you went to Compagne from which place did you start?’

‘From Crespy-en-Valois.’

‘When you arrived at Compagne did many days elapse before you made the sortie?’

‘I arrived secretly at an early hour of the morning, and entered the town so that the enemy could not be aware of my arrival, and the same day, in the evening, I made the sortie in which I was captured.’

‘Were the bells of the church rung on the occasion of your arrival?’

‘If they were, it was not by my command. I had not given it a thought.’

‘Did you not order them to be rung?’

‘I have no recollection of having done so.’

‘Did you make the sortie by the command of your voices?’

‘Last Easter, when in the trenches of Melun, the voices of Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret told me I should be taken prisoner before St. John’s Day; but that I was to keep a brave heart, and take all that befell me with patience, and that in the end God would come to my aid.’

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‘Since then, did your voices tell you that you would be taken?’

‘Yes, often; nearly every day; and I implored my voices that when I was taken I might then die, and not suffer a long imprisonment: and the voices said,

“Be without fear, for these things must happen.” But they did not tell me the time when I should be taken, for had I known that I should not have made that sortie.’

‘Did you not question them about the time in which you would be taken?’

‘I often inquired; but they never told me.’

‘Did your voices cause you to make that sortie, and not tell you the manner by which you would be captured?’

‘Had I known the hour of my capture I should not have gone out voluntarily; but had my voices ordered me to go and I had known, then would I have gone all the same, whatever might have happened.’

‘When you made the sally did you pass over the bridge at Compagne?’

‘I passed over the bridge and along the redoubt; and I charged with my soldiers against John de Luxembourg’s men. Twice were they driven back as far as the quarters of the Burgundans; the third time half as far. While so engaged the English arrived, and cut off our communications. While returning towards the bridge, I was taken in the meadows on the side nearest to Picardy.’

‘Upon your banner, the one you carried, was not a picture painted representing the world and two angels? What was the significance of that?’

‘My saints told me to carry that banner boldly.’

‘Did you not also bear arms and a shield?’

‘Not I; but the King gave my brothers a coat-of-arms; a shield with a blue ground, on which were two _fleurs-de-lis_ of gold, and a sword between.’

‘Did you make a present to your brothers of those arms?’

‘They were given my brothers by the King, without any request made by me.’

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‘What kind of horse were you riding when you were captured?’

‘I was mounted on a *demi-coursier*.’

‘Who had given you that horse?’

‘My King,’ answered Joan of Arc; and she went on to tell them how she had had fine horses purchased by the King for her use; she also gave them an account of her few possessions.

There is, indeed, so much repetition in the questions and answers during these long examinations, that it would be a weariness to the reader did one minutely re-write them as they appear in the chronicle. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the principal and most important facts and statements which bear most prominently on our heroine’s career, and on the answers most characteristic made by her.

The remainder of that first day’s tral in the prison consisted nearly entirely of trying to elicit from Joan of Arc what was the specal sign or secret that she had revealed to the King at Chinon. She, however, gave them no further information than in saying that the sign was a beautiful and honoured mark of Divine favour.

For hours she was urged to tell of what this specal sign or token consisted—whether of precious stones, gold, or silver. Joan, who apparently was wearied out by the pertinacity of her inquisitors, seems to have allowed herself to mix with the reality the fabulous, and described that an angel had appeared to Charles bringing him a crown of matchless beauty. She seems, poor creature, half dazed and bewildered by her sufferings and her tormentors, to have mixed up in her mind and in her replies the actual event of the King’s coronation at Rheims with her angelic visions and voices; for to her one must have appeared as real and actual as the other.

Nine examinations in the prison tower of Rouen were undergone by Joan of Arc:—Once on the 10th of March; twice on the 12th, and again on the 13th; twice on the 14th; again on the 15th; and twice more on the 17th. In all these successive trals, nothing of importance was obtained by the judges from the prisoner. Both answers and questions were similar to those which have already been recorded during the days of her examinations in public. Throughout all this trying process of a week's long and minute cross-questioning, the heroine maintained the same firmness, and answered with the same simple dignity as on the former occasions.

Two of her answers may be justly called sublime. When during the course of the seventh day's tral, she was asked what doctrine Saint Michel had inspired her 266

with, she answered:—

'The pity that I have for the Kingdom of France!'

And again, when at the close of the last day's examination she was asked why she had taken such specal care that her banner should be carried and held near the King during the ceremony of the coronation, she answered:—

'If it had been in the travail it was right that it should be in the place of greatest honour.' ('_Il avait ete ‡ la peine; c'etait bien raison qu'il fut ‡ l'honneur!_') Glorious words, worthy of her who spoke them! They bear with them an heroic ring, and reveal by one sublime expression the very soul and spirit of Joan of Arc!

Little as the secret interrogations had revealed to Joan of Arc's examiners regarding the mysterious sign they were so eager to wrest from her, Cauchon had succeeded in inveigling his victim into making statements he considered could be used in a charge of heresy against her.

When bidden to say if she would be ready to submit herself regarding all her actions to the determination of the Church, she answered that she loved the Church, and was ready to obey its doctrines as far as lay in her power; and

on being asked to which Church she alluded, whether to the Church Militant or to the Church Triumphant, she replied, 'I have been sent to France by God and the Virgin Mary, and by the saints of the Church Victorious from above, and to that Church I submit myself, and all that I have done or may have to do!'

This answer did not satisfy Cauchon, and he again inquired to which Church she submitted; but Joan had already answered, and would say no more—and on this Cauchon fixed his accusation of heresy against the heroine. Having failed throughout the tral to get Joan to say anything incriminating regarding Charles VII. or anything which might tend to injure him in the minds of his subjects, Cauchon had Joan questioned as to what she thought respecting the murder of the Duke of Orleans by Charles.

'It was a great misfortune for the kingdom of France,' was her answer.

Could the wariest statesman have better parried that question? Not on one single occasion during the long series of questions that Joan of Arc was made to undergo, without any counsel or help, and with some of the subtlest brains in the 267

country eager to involve her in damaging statements and to entangle her in saying something which might be taken up as injurious to Charles—that mean prince, who made so much by her devotion to him and his cause, and in return for that devotion had not taken a step towards attempting her deliverance—not at any time did she drop one word or let an expression escape her which could cause any uneasiness to the King, who had proved himself so utterly unworthy of such a subject, or to the men about the King's person, some of whom, if not actually guilty of having given her over to her enemies, at any rate had allowed her to be kept during all those long months a close prisoner, without protest or any sign of sympathy.

When the judges asked Joan if she were as willing to answer the questions put to her, standing in the presence of the Pope, as she had done in the presence of the Bishop of Beauvais, she replied that she would willingly do so. The idea of referring her case to the Pope was not at all what Cauchon

wished to enter her mind; and when he found that John de la Fontaine and two monks had visited the prisoner and advised her to submit herself to Rome, he was furious, and threatened them with condign punishment. They only escaped the Bishop's anger by taking flight from Rouen. It was not too soon for Cauchon's object that the tral was now conducted with closed doors. Joan of Arc's courage, firmness, and simplicity, accompanied by her transparent truth and pure fervent belief in her mission, impressed even her judges—and much more so those who had attended the public days of her tral as spectators. Now and again, after one of her straightforward and brave answers, which would expose and lay bare the malicious intention of the question, voices were heard to say in the great hall, 'Well spoken, Joan!' and an English knight was overheard to declare that, for his part, he regretted that such a courageous maid had not been born an Englishwoman. A reaction in favour of the heroine might have set in, and, as we have already said, it was for fear of this that Cauchon caused the tral in future to be held in private. It is clear from the previous narrative that the prisoner had no one to advise her, no one to support her. At the commencement of the tral she asked to be allowed counsel, but Cauchon refused this most just demand. Among the crowd of doctors and clergy it was impossible but that, now and again, some feeling of interest, even of sympathy, should gain a few of these men, who, in spite of their education and surroundings, were human beings after all. But whenever such feeling was shown, Cauchon, ever on the watch, sternly repressed its manifestation. The name of Isambard de la Pierre should be remembered for good; for he, although one of the creatures of the de-testable Inquisition, showed humanity to Cauchon's victim. During the examinations it was the wont of Isambard to place himself as near as possible to Joan of Arc, and by nudging her, or by some sign, he attempted to help her and advise her in her answers to the questions of the judges. Cauchon's evil eye, however, at 268

length detected Isambard's conduct, and he informed Warwick of it. Soon after, Isambard was confronted by Warwick, and the latter, with many abusive words, threatened to have him drowned in the Seine if he dared assist Joan of Arc.

Though the Maid's treatment in the dungeon of the castle was not, after the beginning of the tral, so barbarous as in the first days after her arrival at Rouen, when she was treated like a caged wild animal, the poor prisoner was watched day and night by three soldiers, who, one must fear, outraged every sense of humanity in their treatment of Joan. The very term houspiller proves that they were set apart to embitter the prisoner's already too cruel state. Although Joan of Arc never herself disclosed the abominable fact, the reason for retaining and continuing to wear her male dress was that it served her as a protection from these ruffans. Chained to a heavy wooden beam, her sufferings must have been at times almost beyond endurance; but in this long torture, which was only to terminate in the flaming death, her wonderful constancy and heaven-inspired spirit never failed. Had she given way to a kind of despair, as happened shortly before her final release—for only a few moments indeed—her jailers would not have neglected to record such weakness as a sign that her heavenly agencies had failed, if not forsaken her utterly. What appears to have constituted the greatest privation to Joan of Arc during her imprisonment was not being allowed the consolation of receiving the rites of the religion she so fervently believed. During the days on which the public examinations were held in the hall of the castle, she was wont to be led from her dungeon by a passage leading to the place of judgment: the castle chapel was passed in traversing this passage. One day while going by the chapel door she asked one of the sheriffs, Massieu, whether the Eucharist was then exposed within the chapel, and, if so, whether she might be permitted to kneel before the entrance. The man was humane enough to allow her to do so, but this coming to the knowledge of one of Cauchon's familars, the sheriff was told if he allowed the prisoner again to kneel before the chapel door that he would be thrown into prison—'and,' added Cauchon, 'in a prison where no light of sun or moon should appear!'

But perhaps among so many instances of cruelty and bigotry, the most infamous act of all the many in this tragedy was that performed by the Canon Nicolas Loiseleur, a creature of Cauchon, as false, as cruel, and as unscrupulous as his master and patron. This reverend scoundrel had, at the beginning of the tral, by his feigned sympathy for the prisoner, wormed himself into Joan of Arc's confidence. He told her that he, too, came from near her home, that he in his heart of hearts belonged to the French side, that

he was a prisoner on account of his known devotion to Charles and to France, and many other such lies. This Judas—half in the character of a layman, half in that of a confessor, and wholly as a sympathetic 269

friend and a fellow-sufferer—paid the prisoner long visits, disguised both as priest and layman, as the part suited the day's action best. Loiseleur actually used the means of extracting information from Joan of Arc under the seal of confession, to be afterwards employed against her by Cauchon. While these conversations and confessions took place, Warwick and Cauchon would be concealed in a part of the dungeon from which they could overhear what passed between the two—one of whom worthily might be called an angel, the other truthfully a devil. With the Bishop and knight—whose conduct as regards Joan of Arc deeply tarnished an otherwise high character—were seated clerks, who wrote down what passed in these meetings. The clerks, to their credit, are said to have at first refused to comply with doing such dirty work.

Cauchon gained but little by this infamy. Nothing of any importance could be constructed out of the prisoner's confidence and confessions; but Cauchon was, through Loiseleur, enabled to tender such advice to Joan as made her answers coincide more closely with his wishes than they otherwise could have done; especally those relating to the Church Triumphant and Militant.

When his crime had borne fruit, Loiseleur, like another Judas, was overwhelmed with an intolerable remorse; and, although he obtained his victim's pardon, his end appears to have been as sudden as that of Judas, if not also self-inflicted. By a lawyer named John Lohier, whom he consulted during the course of the tral, Cauchon was not so well served as he had been by Loiseleur. This Lohier, who was a Norman and seems to have been a worthy man, had the courage to tell Cauchon that inasmuch as Joan of Arc was being tried in secret and without benefit of counsel, the proceedings were null and worthless. Like all who showed any interest for the prisoner, Lohier was threatened by Cauchon with imprisonment, but he escaped and found refuge in Rome.

On Passion Sunday, the 18th of March, Cauchon held a meeting of a dozen of the lawyers, including the Vice-Inquisitor, and asked them to give their opinion on some of the answers of Joan of Arc. He held a second and similar consistory on the 22nd of that month, at which it was decided to shape into the form of a series of articles the chief heads of accusation. This, when made out, was to be submitted to the prisoner. On the 24th, the Bishop, accompanied by the Vice-Inquisitor and some others, proceeded to the dungeon in which Joan of Arc was kept. The day was Palm Sunday, and the great French historan Michelet has, with his accustomed skill and bright, vivid word-painting, in his short but incomparable Life of the heroine not only of France but of humanity, reminded his readers with what a longing Joan of Arc must, on that festival of joy and triumph, have yearned for the privilege 'to breathe once again the fresh air of heaven.' Daughter of the fields, born 270

on the border of the woods, she who had always lived under the open sky had to pass Easter Day in a dark dungeon tower. To her the great succour which the Church invokes upon that day did not reach—her prison door did not fly open.

It may be recalled that on Palm Sunday the morning prayer in the office of the Roman Church contains these words: *'Deus in adjutorium meum intende.'* For her, however, no earthly gate was to be thrown open wide. The gate through which she was to pass from suffering and death into life eternal and peace everlasting—

(*per angusta ad augusta*)—was, however, not far distant. But she had still to wait awhile amid the ever-darkening shadows.

'If,' said Cauchon to Joan, 'you will cease to wear this man's dress, and dress as you would do were you back in your home, you shall be allowed to hear Mass.'

But Joan could not be prevailed on to consent to abandon the costume, which, as we have said, proved her safeguard against the brutality of her jailers.

By the 26th of March the articles were drawn up and ready, and were approved of in a meeting held by Cauchon in his own house. And on these articles, or rather heads of articles, the further tral of the prisoner was to be carried on.

The examination took place on the days following in a chamber next to the great hall in the castle. Nine judges, besides Cauchon, attended. The Bishop ordered Joan to answer categorically all the accusations on which she was arraigned; if she refused to do so, or remained silent beyond a given time, he threatened her with excommunication. He went on to declare that all her judges were men of high position, well versed in all matters appertaining to Church and State; and he had the audacity to qualify them—and probably included himself among them—

as being benins et pitoyables, having no wish to inflict corporal punishment upon Joan, but filled only with the pious desire of leading her into the way of truth and salvation. 'Seeing that,' he continued, 'she was not sufficiently versed in such weighty matters as those they had now to deal with, they in their pitifulness and benignity, would allow her to choose among the learned doctors present, one or more to aid her with counsel and advice.'

The Bishop had probably guessed that by this time Joan of Arc would have ceased to care for the benefit of counsel, having had to do without it till now; and his asking her whether she wished for it was merely made in order to appear as an act of judical indulgence on his part—perhaps, also, what Lohier had urged regarding the illegality of trying his prisoner without giving her the help of counsel may have influenced him.

In a few simple words Joan of Arc thanked the Bishop and the others for the offer, of which she, however, declined to avail herself. She added that she felt no need now of having any human counsel, for that she had that of her Lord to aid her.

Thomas de Courcelles next proceeded to read the articles contained in the act of accusation. These were so long that they occupied the remainder of that and the next day's sitting. This first series of articles—for there were forty more to follow—consisted of thirty heads, and forms one of the most glaring examples of what the human mind is capable of inventing when thoroughly steeped in bigotry, stupidity, and cruelty. The Bishop of Beauvais may have been congratulated on producing the most momentous mass of accusation, intended to destroy the life and reputation of a peerless and perfect woman and to blast the career of his native sovereign: it only redounded to the Bishop's everlasting shame and infamy.

We will spare the reader a detailed summary of these articles—articles which have the lie so palpably and strongly writ all over them, that we can but hesitate whether to be more surprised or disgusted that even such a man as Cauchon could dare to bring them into court.

The preamble of the articles gave the gist of what was to follow, and showed up the true spirit of Joan's 'benign and merciful judges.' It consisted of one long string of abuse, in which the terms 'sorceress,' 'false prophet,' 'a practiser of magic,'

and 'devilish arts,' were freely used. Joan of Arc was declared in this preamble to be 'abominable in the eyes of God and man'; a violator of all laws—divine, ecclesastical and natural. To sum up all the epithets, she was termed 'heretical, or, at any rate, strongly suspected of being so.' This accusation, the most awful that those cruel times held, must have sounded to all those men present as the heroine's knell of doom.

Then followed the thirty articles of accusation. Never, indeed, had a short but well filled career, bright with glorious deeds, undertaken for King and father-land—never had such a life (for no life ever approached that of the Maid's) been so ludicrously, so violently and wilfully misrepresented. Her most innocent words and actions were turned into accusations of sorcery, witchcraft, vice, and every kind of wickedness. Her harmless and pure youth was made to appear a childhood of sorcery and idolatrous superstition; she was accused in her earliest years of having trafficked with evil spirits: it was alleged that she had consorted with witches; that she had frequented places where spirits and fairies best loved to congregate; that she had taken part in sacrilegious dancing; that she had sus-pended wreaths on the trees in honour of these rural spirits; that she had carried 272

hidden about her person a plant called Mandragora, hoping by it to obtain good luck; that she had left her parents against their will to go to Neufchateau, and lived in that place among a debauched set of people: that in consequence of all these wicked acts, a youth who intended marrying her had not done so. Then, having left not a stage or an act of her innocent girlhood unblasted, and covered with the slime of the Bishop's reptile-like imagination, her acts when with the King were reviewed. She had promised Charles to slay all the English in France; her cruelty and love of bloodshed were insatable; she had influenced Charles by acts of magic; her banners and her rings were bewitched; she was schismatic, and doubted as to which was the right Pope; and, in spite of this, she had the wickedness to inform the Earl of Armagnac which of the two Popes he was to believe the genuine. Of all this long tissue of crimes laid to her charge, that of wearing a man's dress was made the most heinous; for the Almighty had made it a crime abominable to Himself, that woman should wear man's dress. Now, not only had the prisoner committed this sin, but she had added to it by affirming that she did so by the wish of God—she had done even worse; for did she not refuse when at the castle of Beaurevoir to wear woman's dress, also when at Arras, and even now in Rouen?

So obstinate was she in her wickedness that she had refused to comply with the Bishop's wish that she should leave off these clothes, although he had

told her she would be allowed to assist at the offices of the Church if she would consent to do so.

To all these accusations, at the end of each paragraph, Cauchon bade Courcelles, who read the accusations, to pause, and would then ask the prisoner what answer she had to make to that accusation. Joan of Arc contented herself by simply denying the alleged crime, or else she referred to the answers she had made to the same, or similar questions, during the former days when under examination. Some of her replies were, as they often had been during those trals, grand in their simplicity. For instance, when asked a difficult and even perplexing question relating to her belief in the Church Militant, she said:—'I believe that the Holy Father, the Bishops, and other clergy, are here for the protection of the Christan faith, and to punish those who deserve it. As to my acts,' she continued, 'I submit them to the Church in Heaven, to God, to the Holy Virgin, and the Saints in Paradise. I have not failed,' she proudly added, 'in the Christan religion; nor will I ever do so.'

When repeatedly questioned about the change of costume, and of its importance regarding her being allowed to attend Mass or not, she said: 'In the eyes of the Saviour the dress of those who receive the Sacrament can have no importance.'

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On the day after, the 28th of March, the same chamber was used for the tral, and the same indictments were entered on. That almost interminable series of accusations numbered some seventy charges. On that day, Joan of Arc appears to have ceased to deny at any length the string of false evidence brought against her; she generally replied that she had already answered as to the crimes laid to her charge, or simply said, 'I refer myself to my Saviour.' Two of her answers are worth recording: the first, when accused of having been guilty not only of discarding the proper dress of her sex, but also of having acted the part of a man, she said: 'As to women's occupation there are plenty of them to occupy themselves with such things'; and to the second question, when taunted with having carried out her mission with violence and slaughter, she answered: 'I implored at the commencement of my mission that peace might be made, while, at the same time, I declared that if that was not agreed to, I was willing to fight.' When she was accused of having made war on the Burgundans and the English alike, she made the distinguishing difference between them by saying:—'As to the Duke of Burgundy, I wrote to him, and asked him through his envoys that peace should be made between him and my King. As regards the English, the only peace that could be made with them is when they have returned to England.' The Maid's natural modesty and simplicity are apparent in a circumstance which occurred in one of those long days of searching examination and cross-questioning. When the sentence she had used, and which had been noted down in the minutes of an early day of the tral, was read as follows: 'All that I have done has been done by the advice of my Saviour,' she stopped the clerk, and said that it should stand thus: 'All that I have done well has been done by the advice of my Saviour.' When she was asked by what form of words she prayed to her Saints to come to her assistance, she repeated the following prayer:—'Very blessed God, in honour of your holy Passion, I beseech you, if you love me, that you will reveal to me what I am to answer these Churchmen. I know concerning the dress the reason for which I have adopted it, but I know not in what manner I am to discard it.

For this thing I beseech you to tell me what to do.' And she added that after this prayer her voices were soon heard.

On the 31st of March, Cauchon, accompanied by the Vice-Inquisitor and some other of the judges, had an interview with the prisoner. They again inquired of Joan of Arc whether she submitted herself wholly and entirely into the hands of the Church Militant. She answered that if such were her Saviour's wish she was quite willing to do so. The accusations were now set forth afresh, in twelve chief heads or articles, under which the series of calumnies was summarised before they should be submitted to the University of Paris. These twelve heads, which formed the foundation of Joan of Arc's condemnation, were never shown her; and she had therefore no chance of contradicting any of the grossly false charges of 274

which they were full. Like the tral itself, these articles were merely a sham invented for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of the people, who by these, it was hoped, would be persuaded that the law of the Church and State had been acted up to. The heads of these articles were as follows:—

First—A woman pretends to have had communication with Saints from her thirteenth year; and she affirms that they have counselled her to dress in male attire; she affirms that she has found her salvation, and refuses to submit herself to the Church.

Second—She affirms that, through a sign, she persuaded the King to believe in her; and that accompanied by an angel she placed a crown upon his head.

Third—She affirms her companionship with Saint Michel and other Saints.

Fourth—She affirms certain things will occur by the revelation obtained by her from certain Saints.

Fifth—She affirms that her wearing a man's dress is done by her through the will of God; she has sinned by receiving the Sacrament in that garb,

which she says she would sooner die than quit wearing.

Sixth—She admits having written letters signed with the names of Jesus and Mary and with the sign of a cross. That, also, she admits having threatened death to those who would not obey her; and she affirms that all she has done has been accomplished by the Divine will.

Seventh—She gives a false account of her journey to Vaucouleurs and to Chinon.

Eighth—She also gives an untrue account of her attempt to kill herself at Beaurevoir, sooner than fall into the power of the English.

Ninth—And also gives false statements of her assurance of salvation, provided she remains a maid, and of never having committed any sin.

Tenth—And also of her pretending that Saints Catherine and Margaret speak to her in French, and not in English, as they do not belong to the latter side.

Eleventh—She admits the adoration of her Saints; her disobedience to her parents; and of saying that if the evil one were to appear in the likeness of 275

Saint Michel she would know it was not the Saint.

Twelfth—Admits that she refuses to submit to the Church Militant, and this in spite of being told that all faithful members of the Church must, by the article 'Unam Sanctam Ecclesam Catholicam,' comply with and submit to the commands of the Church Militant, and principally in all things which pertain to sacred doctrines and the ecclesastical sanctions.

This was the substance of the twelve articles which Cauchon laid before the doctors of theology and law in Paris. No one knew better than the Bishop how false these were; Manchon himself had been so impressed with their utter fraudu-lence that he had inserted in their margin, under the date of the 4th of April, the statement that in many instances the facts alleged were

entirely at varance with the declarations of the prisoner. Cauchon despatched the articles to Paris on the following day, April the 5th. M. Wallon, in his admirable and exhaustive history of Joan of Arc, has remarked that all her deeds were in these twelve articles traves-tied from acts of piety or patriotism into acts of superstition and rebellion against God and His Church. 'What,' asks M. Wallon, 'had her accusers to reproach her with? Her visions? None of her judges could declare these were impossible, for then they would declare themselves unbelievers in the history of all the saints, which is full of such visions. They might deny them if they pleased, but it required all the wilful blindness of passion to affirm, once such things were articles of belief, that they came from Satanic influence.' As regards Joan of Arc's costume, she had on several occasions answered with sufficient clearness, and every person might have made a like answer, that there is no hard and fast law laid down by the Church relating to the costume that may be worn by members of the Church. Nay more, it was notorious that one of the female saints of the Church (Sainte Marine) had always worn a man's dress. The question as to her dress had been gone into thoroughly during Joan of Arc's examination by the Churchmen and laymen at Poitiers; that which the Church had not blamed at Poitiers could not therefore be a sin in Rouen. By the same token, how was it possible for Joan to believe that what had not been disapproved of by the Archbishop at Rheims should be considered a criminal offence by the Bishop of Beauvais? As regards the question of her submission to the Church, Joan of Arc replied, when asked if she would submit to its will, in these words: 'You speak to me of the "Church Militant" and of the "Church Triumphant." I do not understand the signification of those terms; but I wish to submit myself to the Church as all good Christans should do.' What more could be required of her than this entire submission to the Church? She had made that answer to the doctors and clergy at Poitiers, and it had entirely satisfied those men. What Joan of Arc had a clear right not to do was to submit herself to her arch-enemy the Bishop of Beauvais. When she asked what Cauchon and his judges 276

called the 'Church Militant,' she was told it consisted of the Pope and the prelates below him. She thereupon exclaimed she would willingly appear before him, but that she would not submit to the judgment of her enemies,

and particularly not to Cauchon. ‘In saying this,’ adds M. Wallon, ‘she displayed her usual courageous spirit. How eagerly had she,’ he remarks (when told that if she would submit herself to the Council then sitting at Bâle, where she would find some judges of her party among the English), ‘appealed to be allowed to bring her case before that Council; and it will be remembered how Cauchon cursed the lawyer who had brought forward the suggestion during the tral.’ On that occasion escaped from the prisoner’s lips the cry which showed how well she knew the unscrupulous-ness of her judges. On learning that her wish to appeal to the Council of Bâle by Cauchon’s order was not to appear in that day’s report of the tral, she said, ‘You write down what is against me, but you will not write what is favourable to me.’

Along with the twelve articles, Cauchon enclosed a letter to the lawyers in Paris asking for their opinion on what he calls the facts submitted to them, ‘whether they do not appear to be contrary to the orthodox faith, to the Scriptures, and to the Church of Rome, and whether the learned members of the Church and doctors do not consider such things as stated in these articles as scandalous, dangerous to civil order, injurious and adverse to public morals.’ In every way Cauchon’s letter was worthy of its author.

On the 12th of April a meeting under the presidency of Erard Emenyart, consisting of a score of lawyers and clergy, was held in the chapel of the archiepiscopal palace. At this meeting, with scarcely a dissentient voice, it was voted that Joan of Arc had by her deeds and her expressed opinions proved herself schismatical and strongly tainted with heresy. A second meeting took place in the same building on the following day, attended by some more Church functionar-ies. Some of these suggested that the prisoner should be promptly handed over to the secular arm—if she refuses still to renounce her errors—and if she acknowledges them, her fate will then be to be imprisoned for life, and given for nourishment ‘the bread of sorrows and the water of anguish.’ Eleven advocates—all belonging to Rouen—however, added the following clause, that the latter should be her punishment, ‘provided that her revelations do not come from God.’ But with the fear of Cauchon before them, they added to this clause that the revelations coming from such a source seems hardly probable, and they appeal to the bach-elors in theology to set them right on that head. The Bishop of Lisieux, who had already given as his reason for not believing that Joan of Arc’s mission

could be Heaven-inspired the fact of the low station from which she came, now repeated the same absurdity on this occasion. There were others who preferred delaying their verdict until the decision arrived at by the University of Paris had been made known. A number of the Churchmen belonging to the Chapter of the Cathedral of 277

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Rouen hesitated, divided between two opinions, for and against the Maid, and of these only twenty put in an appearance when summoned by Cauchon to meet on the 13th of April. They were threatened and bullied by the Bishop to come in stronger numbers on the next day, when they attended to the number of thirty-one, but could not be prevailed on to give a definite opinion until the answer arrived from the University—which ultimatum Cauchon had to take with as much grace as he could. While these things were taking place, Joan of Arc fell ill—worn out probably by her long and harsh imprisonment, by the mental as well as physical torment she must have undergone during those weeks of cross-questioning and endless browbeating. Her jailers were more alarmed about her condition than she was herself, for were she to die a natural death, half the moral effect her enemies counted on obtaining by giving her the death of a sorceress and heretic would be lost. Doctors were sent for—sent by the Cardinal of Winchester and Warwick.

When asked what ailed her she said that her illness had commenced after eating a fish that had been sent her by the Bishop of Beauvais. Warwick is said to have had the brutality to tell the doctors that her life must be saved at all hazards, for she had to die by the hands of the executioners. The doctors ordered her to be bled, and her naturally strong constitution soon restored her to health. During the days of the weakness following her illness, Cauchon, thinking probably that more might be then wrung from her than when well, came to see her. This was on the 18th of April. He went to the dungeon accompanied by the Vice-Inquisitor and half-a-dozen judges, and the following charitable exhortation, as the chronicler styles it, took place.

‘We have come,’ began Cauchon, ‘to you with charitable and amable intentions, to console you in your sickness. You will remember, Joan, how you have been questioned on various matters relating to the faith, and you

know the answers you made. Knowing your ignorance relating to such matters, we are willing to send learned and well-versed men in such matters.' Then turning to the lawyers and others present, the Bishop continued: 'We exhort you to give Joan profitable counsel on the obligations which appertain to the true doctrine of the faith, and to the furtherance of the safety and welfare of her body and soul. 'Joan,' continued Cauchon, 'if there be any one else you wish to consult in this matter, we are ready to send for such in order that they may aid you. We are men of the Church, ever ready to aid those in need of advice good for the soul as well as the body, and ready to benefit you or any of your own kith, or ourselves. We should gladly give you daily such to advise you. In a word, we are ready, under the circumstances, to aid you, as does the Church itself, ever ready to help all such who will willingly come to her. But beware to act against our advice and exhortation. For if you still should refuse to submit yourself to us, we shall abandon you. Judge then of the peril you lie in in that case. It is this peril which we hope to prevent you from 278

falling into with all our strength and all our affection.'

To this Mephistophelean address Joan of Arc made the following reply: 'I render you my best thanks for what you have said respecting the salvation of my soul; and it seems to me, seeing the illness I am now suffering, that I am in danger of dying. If this is to happen, God's will be done. I will only ask you to allow me to confess, and to partake of the Blessed Sacrament, and that my body may be laid in holy ground.'

Cauchon replied as follows: 'If you wish to receive the Sacraments of the Church you must confess yourself like a good Catholic, and you must also submit yourself to the Church. If you persevere in not doing so, you cannot obtain what you desire, except that for Penitence, which we are always ready to administer.'

Joan wearily said to this: 'I have then nothing more to say.'

The Bishop, however, had no wish that the interview should end thus, and continued: 'The greater your danger of now dying is, the greater reason have

you to amend your life; if you do not submit yourself to the Church, then you will not obtain the privilege of a Catholic to its Sacraments.'

To this she answered: 'If I die here in prison, I trust my body will be placed in consecrated earth. If you refuse me this favour, I can but appeal to my Saviour!'

'You said,' quoth Cauchon, 'during the tral that if you had done or said anything that was against our Christan faith you could not support it!'

'I refer myself,' said Joan, 'to the answer I then made, and to our Lord!'

'You said,' continued the Bishop, 'that you had received many revelations both from God and from the saints. Suppose, then, that now some worthy person were to appear, declaring that they had received a revelation from God about your deeds, would you believe that person?'

To this the prisoner replied: 'There is not a Christan on earth, who, coming to me and saying that he came by such revelation, I should not know whether to believe or not, for I should know whether he were true or false by Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret.'

'But,' said Cauchon, 'do you imagine then that God is not able to reveal to some one besides yourself things that you may be ignorant about?'

Joan answered: ‘Without a sign, I should not believe man or woman.’

Then Cauchon asked Joan if she believed in the holy Scriptures?

‘You know that I do,’ she answered.

Then the Bishop again returned to the question whether or not the prisoner consented to submit herself to the Church Militant, by which the Church Temporal should be understood.

Now, as before, Joan of Arc’s answer was unchanged.

‘Whatever,’ she said, ‘may happen to me, I shall neither do nor say anything further than that I have already declared during the tral.’

In vain all the venerable doctors present exhorted the prisoner to make her submission; they quoted Scripture, chapter and verse, to her (Matt. xviii.), without obtaining any more success than the Bishop had done.

As they were leaving the prison one of these ‘venerable doctors’ hissed to Joan: ‘If you refuse to submit to the Church, the Church will abandon you as if you were a Saracen.’

To this Joan of Arc replied: ‘I am a good Christan—a Christan born and baptized—and a Christan I shall die.’

Before Cauchon left his victim he made one further attempt to obtain a decided answer from Joan of Arc, this time making use of a bait which he thought must catch her—namely, permission to receive the Communion: ‘As,’ he said, ‘you desire the Eucharist, will you, if you are allowed to do so, submit yourself to the Church?’

To this offer Joan answered: ‘As to that submission I can give no other answer than that I have already given you. I love God; Him I serve, as a

good Christan should. Were I able I would help the Church with all my strength.'

'But,' said Cauchon, 'if we were to order a grand procession to restore your health, then would you not submit yourself?'

'I only request,' she answered, 'that the Church and all good Catholics will 280

pray for me.'

Some of the judges had suggested that, in a more public place than in her prison, Joan of Arc should be again admonished relating to the crimes of which she was accused; and Cauchon accordingly summoned a public meeting of the judges for the 2nd of May, to be held in a chamber near the Great Hall.

On that day sixty-two judges were present. Cauchon took care that the actual charges contained in the twelve articles which had been sent to the University should not be read in the presence of the prisoner, and told her that she had only been summoned in order to receive another admonition before a larger as-semblage than had as yet met.

In his opening allocution he told his audience that the private admonition had been unattended with good results, that Joan had refused to submit herself to the Church, and that he had accordingly invited to the present meeting a learned doctor of theology, namely, John de Chatillon, archdeacon of Evreux, whose eloquence he doubted not would have a benefical effect upon the stubbornness of the prisoner.

On Joan being led into the room, the Bishop admonished her to listen to what Chatillon would now lay before her, and to agree to what he would advise. If she would not do so, he added, she would place herself in jeopardy, both as to her body and as to her soul.

Chatillon then took up his parable, which was to the effect that all faithful Christans must conform to the tenets of the Church; and that he trusted she

would do so to all that the doctors lay and spiritual there present expected her.

The Archdeacon held a digest of his sermon in his hand. Seeing this, Joan of Arc requested him to read his book, after which, she said, she would make her answer.

The speech, or sermon, that he then delivered was an exhaustive examination of the twelve articles, brought under six heads, but much altered and garbled.

In the first place, he admonished her of not having given a full account of her apparitions to the Church through her judges; secondly, he told her of her culpability in insisting on retaining her male attire; thirdly, of her wickedness in asserting that she committed no crime in retaining that dress; fourthly, her sin in holding as true revelations that could only lead the people into error; fifthly, that 281

she had, owing to these revelations, done deeds displeasing to the Divine will; and lastly, that she was committing a sin in treating the apparitions as holy, when she was not certain whether they did not come from evil spirits. When Chatillon said that by not conforming to the article 'Sanctam Ecclesam,' she placed herself in the power of the Church to condemn her to the flames, and to be burnt as a heretic, she answered boldly:

'I will not say aught else than that I have already spoken; and were I even to see the fire I should say the same!'

After this answer in the minutes of that day's tral is written by the clerk in the margin of the vellum:

'Superba responsio!'

That was a testimony of admiration which neither the fears of persecution nor of superstition could prevent from appearing.

Nothing more was to be obtained from the prisoner's lips than this declaration, either by private or public examinations. This being so, Cauchon bethought him what further cruelty could be employed to force the prisoner to give way, and the barbarous scheme of torture was decided on.

The only portion of the old castle of Rouen that has survived Time, war, revolutions, and rebuilding (although partally restored), is a massive high tower, built of white stone, called the Tower of Joan of Arc. This is not the tower of the castle which contained the heroine's dungeon, but it has always been traditionally regarded as that in which, on the 9th of May, Joan of Arc was led to where her judges intended, by fear or by the infliction of bodily torment, to oblige her to make the confession which she had so steadily and for so long a time refused. The lower portion of this tower only is ancient, for from about its centre to the top is a restoration.

The chamber to which Joan of Arc was led, and where the instruments of torture and the executioners were waiting, is probably that on the ground floor, and is but little changed from what it was on that May morning in the year of grace 1431.

In that dark stone chamber with its groined roof, besides the prisoner, were present Cauchon, with the Vice-Inquisitor, the Abbot of Saint Corneille of Compagne, Willam Erard, Andrew Marguerie, Nicolas de VenderAs, John Massieu, 282

Willam Haiton, Aubert Morel, and the infamous Loiseleur. Ranged round the circular walls were placed the instruments of torture, and men skilled in their use were ready at hand.

'Joan,' said Cauchon, who had now dropped his hypocritical semblance of sympathy, which he had assumed when interrogating the prisoner in her cell, 'I command you to tell the truth. In your examination many and various points have been touched on, about which you refused to answer, or, when you did so, answered untruthfully. Of this we have certain proof. These points will now be read to you.'

What was then read was probably a summary of the articles of impeachment.

Cauchon then continued: ‘If, Joan, you now refuse to speak the truth, you will be put to the torture. You see before you the instruments which are prepared, and by them stand the executioners, who are ready to do their office at our command. You will be tortured in order that you may be led into the way of truth, and for the salvation of your body and soul, which you by your lies have exposed to so great a peril.’

It was at this terrible juncture that Joan showed her indomitable spirit more clearly than at any moment since her capture. In front of her lay the rack upon which, at a signal from Cauchon, her limbs would be wrenched asunder; but her reply, as given in the minutes written by the clerk who was present, bears the ring of a courage superior to all the terrors which confronted her.

‘Even,’ she said, ‘if you tear me limb from limb, and even if you kill me, I will not tell you anything further. And even were I forced to do so, I should afterwards declare that it was only because of the torture that I had spoken differently.’

That was an answer which sums up the whole folly and crime of obtaining evidence by means of torture, and recalls Galileo’s famous phrase when in a somewhat similar situation.

Cauchon then again ordered Joan to tell them of her revelations, and asked her if she had again sought counsel from her voices.

She had, answered Joan.

‘And have they,’ asked the Bishop, ‘foretold what will now happen?’

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'I asked them,' answered Joan of Arc, 'if I should be burnt, and they answered: "Abide by your Lord and He will aid you."'

There is little more than the above recorded of what took place, but it is probable that Joan, who had as yet hardly recovered from her illness, was, from fear of her dying under the torture, not subjected to it. At any rate, that additional horror was not to be laid on the consciences of the already heavily burthened judges of the Maid.

It appears, however, that these men had not altogether given up the idea of carrying out this barbarity, so congenal to such a man as Cauchon and to his friend the Inquisitor; for a meeting was summoned by Cauchon at his house three days after Joan had been brought face to face with the torture apparatus, at which the question was discussed as to whether it should not after all be used.

Thirteen judges met the Bishop and the Inquisitor to discuss the question.

Of these the following were against applying torture: MaItres Roussel, VenderAs, Marguerie, Erard, Barbier, Gastinel, Coppequesne, Ledoux, De la Pierre, Haiton, and LemaIstre. One of these, Erard, remarked that it was unnecessary to torture the prisoner seeing that, as he expressed it, 'they had already sufficient evidence to condemn her to death without putting her to torment.' But Morel de Courcelles, and Loiseleur were in favour that it should be made use of. Surely the names of these men deserve to be held in execration, and placed by the side of Cauchon's in the historic pillory of everlasting infamy.

Meanwhile the University of Paris were deliberating upon their answer to the twelve articles. This body met on the 29th of April, within the convent of Saint Bernard. The ancient building, in which the University held many notable conclaves when even Popes were judged by the doctors of Paris, still exists, but it has been transformed into an oil warehouse. John de Troyes,

senior of the Faculty of Theology, was the spokesman, and read the decisions of the faculty on each of the twelve articles. It is unnecessary to go through the long verbage of abuse and blasphemy with which these theologans thought it their duty to bespatter Joan of Arc.

On every head these reverend seigneurs condemned her. After De Troyes had finished his reading of the opinions and the judgment, GuErold de Boissel read the deliberations of the Faculty of Decrees upon the six points of accusation.

'If this woman,' so ran the rede, 'was in her right mind when she made affirmation of the propositions contained in the twelve articles, one may say in the manner of 284

counsel and of doctrine, and to speak charitably, first, that she is schismatic in separating herself from obedience to the Church; secondly, that she is out of the pale of the law in contradicting the article "_Unam Sanctam Ecclesam Catholicam_"; thirdly, apostate, for having cut short her hair, which was given her by God to hide her head with, and also in having abandoned the dress of a woman for that of a man; fourthly, vicious and a soothsayer, for saying, without showing miracles, that she is sent by God, as was Moses and John the Baptist; fifthly, rebel to the faith, by remaining under the anathema framed by the canons of the Church, and by not receiving the Sacraments of the Church at the season set apart by the Church, in order not to have to cease wearing the dress of a man; and, sixthly, blasphemous in saying that she knows she will be received into Paradise. Therefore, if after being charitably warned she refuses to re-enter the Catholic faith, and thereby give satisfaction, she shall be given over to the secular judges, and meet with the punishment due to her crimes.'

And the University of Paris in solemn conclave ratified the above judgment.

The University also sent Cauchon a letter of commendation, in which he was held up to the general admiration as a faithful pastor, zealous in good works, on whom the University trusted that the Almighty would, on the day of His manifestation, bestow an imperishable crown of glory.

Such were the sentiments of the most erudite, most pious, and most eminent school of learning existing in the capital of France. On the 19th of May Cauchon summoned yet another gathering of Joan's judges in the archiepiscopal palace at Rouen. Fifty of them attended. After some discussion, during which a few of the learned men present expressed their opinion that Joan of Arc should be at once handed over to the secular arm, it was decided that the prisoner should again be brought before them to be what they were pleased to call 'charitably admonished.'

Accordingly, four days after, on the 23rd of May, in a chamber near Joan of Arc's dungeon, another meeting was held. On this occasion a canon of Rouen, named Peter Morice, was ordered to question the prisoner.

He commenced by delivering a long lecture, in which he recapitulated the twelve articles, and wound up his oration by imploring Joan to submit herself to the Church Militant, and threatening her with the loss of body and soul in this world and the next if she still refused to do so.

Joan of Arc was as unmoved and as firm when thus threatened as she had been when placed before the instruments of torture, and she replied:—

'If I were to see the fire itself, the stake, and the executioner ready to light

the pile, and were I in the midst of the flames, I should not say anything else than what I have already spoken during the tral, and this is my determination, even unto my death!'

There is some probability for believing that, during the following evening after this last meeting of Joan of Arc and her judges, Loiseleur gained admittance to the prisoner, and, under the disguise of a friendly and sympathetic priest, promised Joan that if she would conform to the wishes of the judges, she should be taken out of the prison she now lay in and the custody of the English, and transferred to prisons belonging to the Church.

Poor Joan's chief desire was that she might be set free from the hands of the English. Be this as it may, there is no authority given for this idea of Loiseleur having probed her on this point; and Wallon, in his history of the Maid, makes no allusion to such an interview, and only states that John Beaupare went in the morning of the 24th to the prison, and he was soon followed there by Nicolas Loiseleur, who vehemently urged on Joan to comply with the demands which the judges had made.

Nothing had been neglected to give the greatest solemnity to the cruel farce which Cauchon had prepared to be now enacted—a solemnity by which the Bishop hoped to degrade Joan of Arc in the eyes of the people. It was that of oblig-ing the prisoner to make a public apology and recantation of all her deeds—a declaration in fact to be made by her in the eyes of the whole world that all she had undertaken and accomplished had been through and by the aid of evil spirits.

By this stroke the Bishop hoped to show to France that its heroine, instead of being a sainted and holy maid sent by God to deliver her country from the invader, was, by her own open and public confession, proved to be an emanation from Satan—a being abhorrent in the eyes of God and man. By this device, Cauchon hoped also to deal a blow to Charles, for when once it became known that his servant and saviour was a creature in league with the fiends, all the works done through her influence, and by her prowess, including his coronation, would also be proved to have been accomplished by the powers of darkness, and therefore deeds abhorrent to all good Catholics throughout his realm.

The place chosen for the stage on which Joan of Arc was to abjure before the eyes of Rouen—and through Rouen the rest of France—her deeds and her words, was the cemetery in front of that most beautiful of all Gothic fanes—the Church of Saint Ouen.

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Adjacent to its southern wall the exquisitely carved portal named the Marmousets, then as now rich in statuary of royal and imperal benefactors of the Church, looks down upon what is the entrance to a fair public garden. In the fifteenth century this space was used as a place of bural.

Here, arranged with a view to dramatic effect, were placed two huge wooden scaffolds, or rather platforms, which faced one another. Upon one of these sat the Bishop of Beauvais in state. He had on his right hand the Prince Cardinal of Winchester, great-uncle of the child-king Henry VI., with other notabilities of the Church; the Bishops of Norwich, of Noyon, and of ThErouenne; the Vice-Inquisitor, eight abbots, and a large number of frars and doctors, clerical and lay—in fact all those who had attended the trals of the Maid of Orleans during the two preceding months. Upon the opposite platform stood Joan of Arc, a crowd of lawyers and priests about her. Here, too, stood Loiseleur close by the prisoner; he never ceased urging her to conform to the commands of the clergy about her.

A vast throng of the town's-people gathered below, and the place was all in a turmoil. A seething mob had followed the Maid from her prison to the cemetery, which, already full, now held with difficulty the fresh press of people who accompanied Joan of Arc and her guards to the purlieus of the Church of Saint Ouen.

Willam Erard had been appointed by Cauchon to preach in this 'terrible comedy,' as Michelet calls this farce of the Maid's abjuration. For text the monk selected the fifteenth chapter of Saint John's gospel: 'The branch,' etc. Erard showed in his discourse how Joan had fallen from one sin into another, till she had at length separated herself from the Church. To a long string of abuse about herself Joan of Arc listened with perfect patience; but the preacher, not content with hurling his invectives at the prisoner, began to attack her King for having listened to Joan's advice, by which conduct the King had, Erard said, also incurred the crime of heresy.

This attack on Charles roused the indignation of the Maid. Turning on the monk, without a moment's thought of her own situation, and the fresh danger she exposed herself to, the noble girl exclaimed: 'By my faith, and with all respect to you, I dare to affirm on my peril that the King of this realm is the noblest of Christans, and no one has greater love for the Faith and Church than my King!'

'Silence her!' shrieked the preacher, beside himself with rage at finding that these few words from the lips of Joan of Arc had destroyed all the effect of his eloquence on that vast crowd, whose sympathy must have been now strongly 287

shown towards the glorious victim before them.

Again summoned to submit to the Church, Joan said: 'I have answered on that point already to my judges. I call upon them to send an account of all my actions to the Holy Father at Rome, to whom after God I submit myself.'

This was not what Cauchon wished his victim to express, for one of the charges that he had made against her was her refusal to submit to the Pope. He therefore changed the subject, and asked Joan of Arc whether she acknowledged that there were any things evil among those deeds she had committed or said.

'As to my deeds and sayings,' she answered, 'I have done them by the command of God.'

'Then you admit,' said the Bishop, 'that the King and others have sometimes urged you to act as you have done?'

'As to my words and actions,' she answered, 'I make no one, and particularly not the King, responsible. If any wrong has been committed, it is I who am to blame, and not another.'

'But,' said Cauchon, 'those acts and words of yours which have been found evil by the judges, will you recant them?'

‘I submit them,’ said Joan, ‘to God and our Holy Father the Pope.’

‘The bishops,’ continued Cauchon, ‘are the judges in their dioceses, therefore you must submit to the Church as your judges have determined that you shall do.’

Joan still refused, and the Bishop then began to read the sentence condemning her to death as a heretic.

Now arose a great uproar among the clergy and others on the platforms and among the crowd beneath. Loiseleur and Massieu urged her to abjure; the former promising that if she consented she would, after abjuring, be taken from her English jailers and placed in keeping of the clergy. In the midst of the hubbub Erard produced a parchment scroll, on which, he told Joan, were written the different accusations against her, which she had only to sign with her mark to be saved. All about this abjuration was a mesh of confusion to the mind of Joan. Massieu told her she need but make a mark on the parchment before her to be delivered: 288

if not—and he pointed down to a grim figure near the foot of the stage they were on, where stood the headsman with cart and assistants, ready to draw her to the stake.

‘Abjure!’ cried Erard and Massieu, ‘or you will be taken and burnt.’

Even Joan of Arc’s courage failed at that sight, and all the woman in her nature asserted itself.

‘Do what I tell you,’ cried Loiseleur; ‘abjure and put on woman’s dress, and all will yet be well.’

The text of the abjuration was then hurriedly read, Joan of Arc following it, and repeating the words, the sense of which she had no time to understand. She spoke the words, it is said, as one in a dream. Some said she did this mockingly, for she was observed to smile once or twice; but the poor soul’s spirit was crushed, and doubtless the whole scene was to her like an evil dream—the poor broken-down body could not discriminate what words she

was forced to repeat. A troubled, horrible dream must that have seemed to the hapless maiden, standing on that scaffold, with all the shouting mob about, and all her deadly enemies at hand. She made her mark on the parchment—a little cross—and the deed was done.

In the recantation, or abjuration, thus obtained from Joan of Arc, the twelve articles were included, with all their abuse set down. Thus was Joan obliged by her signature to declare that all her visions and voices were false and from evil spirits; also that she had been guilty of transgressing laws divine in having worn her hair cut short and the dress of a man; also in having caused bloodshed; also in having idolatrously invoked evil spirits; also in having treated God and His sacra-ments with contempt; and, besides all this, of having acted schismatically, and of having fallen foul of the Church: all of which crimes and errors she now abjured, and humbly submitted herself to the will of the Church and its ordinances. She promised with her abjuration not to relapse, and called on Saint Peter, the Pope, as well as the Bishop of Beauvais and other of her judges, to keep her word.

Not content with having inveigled Joan of Arc into signing this farrago of blasphemous nonsense, her judges, it seems, added fraud to their crime by reading to the prisoner a different recantation from that to which they had forced her to sign her mark. The one she marked contained only six lines, and it did not take longer to read these few lines, an eye-witness afterwards asserted, than it does to repeat the ‘Paternoster’; whereas the one produced after the ceremony of the abjuration filled several sides. But in an act of such infamy as this of having cheated 289

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Joan of Arc not only into signing a recantation of her life-work, but of confessing to her existence having been one long series of superstitious and criminal workings with the spirits of evil, it matters very little whether she signed a longer or a shorter list of falsehoods invented by her persecuting judges.

While these things were taking place upon the platform on which Joan was bullied into signing this abjuration, the English and their faction in the crowd below began to fear that their victim would escape them; they had not

grasped the astuteness of the French prelate, who was ready to hand his prisoner over to them directly he had obtained this recantation from her hand. Cauchon was, however, obliged to keep them waiting until he had got that by which he hoped to destroy Joan of Arc's fame, and at the same time, and by the same deed, to retain in his possession a formidable weapon by which he thought to weaken the cause of the French monarch.

Cauchon may well have felt on that afternoon that what he had done for the English cause merited as his reward the coveted archbishopric of Rouen. There remained but one further act for him to play in this drama before he quitted his platform. Rising from among his brother bishops he read a list of the crimes committed by the prisoner, and announced that, as Joan had now, owing to her abjuration of her sins, re-entered into the fold of the Church, she was absolved by him from her excommunication. However, he added, as she had sinned so grievously against God and the Church, he, for the sake of her soul's welfare, condemned her to perpetual imprisonment—'to the water of sorrow, and the bread of anguish,'

so that she might repent of her faults, and cease ever to commit any more.

Then, in spite of the promises made to her of being placed in the charge of the clergy, Cauchon ordered that Joan should be taken back to her former prison.

Warwick is said to have displayed anger at this termination of the proceedings. Observing this, one of the judges pacified him by assuring him that Joan should not be allowed to escape her fate: 'Do not fear, my lord,' he said; 'you will catch her yet.'

That evening the Vice-Inquisitor, accompanied by Loiseleur, Thomas de Courcelles, Isambard de la Pierre, and a few other of the judges who had taken part in the proceedings that day at Saint Ouen, visited the prisoner. Their object in going to her was to insist upon her changing her man's dress, with which demand she now had to comply. That occurred on Thursday night, and on the Sunday following a rumour was spread abroad that Joan of Arc had discarded the woman's dress, and had again put on male dress.

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Although, during the last days of the heroine's life, it is most difficult to gather anything authentic as to her treatment in the prison, we are led to understand, by the least untrustworthy testimony, that what happened in the interval between Thursday night and the following Sunday was as follows.

The soldiers placed in charge of Joan after her recantation and her return to the prison had rendered her existence a long martyrdom; and there is reason to believe that on her discarding her man's dress these ruffans attempted to violate the prisoner: so, sooner than suffer this, although she knew that to return to her former dress would be equivalent to meeting certain death, she did not hesitate to save her maidenhood at the exposure of her life.

Michelet, in his history of the Maid, quotes from the deposition of one of the officals—Massieu, who saw much of Joan of Arc in those last days—the statement that on the morning of Trinity Sunday, on waking, she asked the soldiers to leave her alone for a few moments while she dressed; that one of the men removed her woman's clothes, and in place substituted the dress of a man; and that, in order not to be naked, she was obliged to put on the latter.

Be this as it may, on the following morning, Cauchon, followed by several of his creatures, returned to the prison, in order that he might see and show to others that his victim had been entrapped at last. 'We have come,' he said to the prisoner, 'to find out the state of your soul, and we find you, in despite of our command, and despite of your promise to renounce this man's dress, again thus attired. Tell us the reason why you have dared again to wear these clothes.'

Joan's answer was that she preferred that dress to the other, and that, being placed among men, it was better that she should wear it than the dress of a woman. Although not placed in the judical record of this interview, Manchon adds in his account of the proceedings on that day, that Joan of Arc also said that she had returned to wearing her male attire, feeling safer

when in that dress than when she was dressed in woman's clothes. This seems to us an evident avowal that she had to resist the brutality of the men placed over her in the dungeon. Massieu also adds to Manchon's testimony that he knew Joan was unable to protect herself against attempts made to violate her. Her legs were chained to the wood with which her pallet bed was framed, and this chain was again fixed to a large beam about six feet long, and locked with a padlock; so that the poor creature could hardly move. To the above testimony of these two men, Isambard de la Pierre adds his. He states that when Cauchon came to the Maid's dungeon she bore all the traces of having undergone a violent struggle, 'being all in tears, and so bruised 291

and outraged (_outrageE_) that he (Isambard) could not help feeling pity for her.'

But the strongest testimony of all is that of the priest, Martin Ladvenu, who heard her confession on the eve of her death, and he confirms Isambard's statement entirely. He even adds that not only had Joan of Arc to suffer from the brutality of the soldiery placed about her, but that a _millourt d'Angleterre_ had acted as shamefully as these men towards her.

Although Michelet and other French writers have naturally not allowed this

'Millourt' (which, by the way, is quite as correct a form of spelling that title as the better known 'Milor') to escape the branding he deserves for his attempted vil-lainy, it is but fair to add that Isambard de la Pierre, as well as Manchon, qualify his conduct as that not of a would-be violator, but of a tempter—a not inconsiderable difference in the scale of infamy.

To return to Cauchon and Joan of Arc.

'But,' said the Bishop, 'are you not aware you have now no right to wear such a dress?'

Joan answered that she had been misled into believing that if she wore the woman's dress she would be allowed to hear Mass and to communicate, and

to be, she added, ‘delivered from these chains.’

‘But,’ replied Cauchon, ‘have you not abjured, and promised never to take to wearing this dress again?’

‘I would prefer to die,’ she answered, ‘than to remain on a prisoner here.

But if I were allowed to go to the Mass, and these chains were taken off me, and if I was placed in some other prison where some woman could be near me, then I should do all that is required of me by the Church.’

In all Joan of Arc’s answers it should be noticed that she never, in spite of the terrible sufferings she endured, and the gross barbarities inflicted on her, in any single instance ever made any complaint of her treatment. There is something superhuman in this utter absence of any shade of vindictiveness, when one thinks that, by a few words, she might have saved herself from much of what she had to suffer. Never once did she blame even those who had deceived, insulted, and ill-treated her; her life was one beautiful example, full of divine charity and forgiveness.

Cauchon, to make doubly sure of completing his work, then asked Joan:

‘Have you, since last Thursday, heard the voices of Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret?’

‘Yes,’ she answered.

‘And,’ continued the Bishop, ‘what did they say?’

‘They told me of the great sorrow they felt for the great treason to which I have been led, by my abjuring and revoking my deeds in order to save my life, and that by so doing I have lost my soul.’

On the margin of the original document of the MSS. of this examination, written in the prison, the original of which is in the National Library in Paris, we find alongside of this answer of Joan of Arc’s the following words: ‘Responsio mortifera.’ Indeed it was an answer of deadliest import; for Joan in asserting that her voices had again spoken to her, and in saying that she had committed a mortal sin by recanting her deeds, had thrown away the only plank of safety left her.

It seems to us evident, however, that Joan of Arc was now quite eager and willing to meet the worst that her enemies could inflict upon her: death itself must now have seemed more tolerable than the daily death she was undergoing in her prison.

‘Did your voices urge you to resist giving way about the recantation?’ questioned the Bishop.

‘My voices,’ Joan said, ‘told me as I stood on the platform before the people that I should answer the preacher with boldness.’

‘Did he not,’ said Cauchon, ‘speak the truth?’

‘No,’ she answered, ‘he was a false preacher; and he accused me of having done things which I never did.’

‘But,’ then said Cauchon, ‘do you mean to tell us that you still persist in saying that you have been sent by God?’

To which Joan replied that that was still her belief.

‘Then,’ continued the Bishop, ‘you deny that to which you swore on oath

only last Thursday?’

‘My voices,’ said Joan, ‘have told me since then that I had committed a bad deed in saying that I had not done the things which I have done!’

‘Then,’ continued the Bishop, with eagerness, ‘you retract your abjuration?’

‘It was,’ said Joan of Arc, ‘from the fear of being burnt that I retracted what I had done; but I never intended to deny or revoke my voices.’

‘But then,’ said Cauchon, ‘are you now no longer afraid of being burnt?’

‘I had rather die than endure any longer what I have now to undergo.’

And with these broken-hearted words of the sufferer ended this long mockery of a tral, so patiently endured during three weariful months by the martyr Maid.

On quitting the prison, Cauchon met Lord Warwick among some Englishmen in the outer court of the castle. They were clamouring that the execution of Joan of Arc should be soon carried out. The Bishop accosted the Earl with a smile of triumph, and said to him in English:—

‘You can dine now with a good appetite. We have caught her at last!’

The next day, the 29th of May, Cauchon summoned a large number of prelates and doctors—forty-two in all—to meet him at the archiepiscopal chapel, where he recounted to them all the circumstances of his late interview with the prisoner.

He told them how he had found Joan, in spite of her abjuration, again dressed as a man, and of her having reaffirmed all that she had so recently abjured regarding her voices and apparitions. When he had concluded, Cauchon took the opinion of those around him. Without one dissentient voice, they all affirmed that she should be handed over to the secular arm—_i.e._, burnt. The deliberation had not taken long, and, after thanking the company, the Bishop made out a formal order by which Joan was summoned at eight o'clock on the next morning to the old market-place, there to be delivered into the hands of the civil judge, and by him to be handed over to those of the executioners. 'We conclude,' said the Bishop, as he dismissed the meeting, 'that Joan shall be treated as a relapsed heretic, for this appears to us right and proper in the sight of law and justice.'

Early in the morning of Wednesday, the 30th of May—a date which should

be held sacred in France as that of the martyrdom of her who through all time must be her country's greatest glory—two priests (Martin Ladvenu and John ToutmouillE) were sent by the Bishop's order to the prisoner to tell her that her last day on earth had come. ToutmouillE describes, with some pathos, the manner in which Joan of Arc received the terrible news. She, he tells us, at first wept bitterly, and said she would sooner be beheaded seven times than suffer such a death as that of burning. She recalled with pain the promises made by Cauchon to her—

that after she had abjured she would be taken to the prison of the Church, for then, she said, this cruel death would not have befallen her; and she called upon God, 'the omnipotent and just Judge,' to take pity on her. While she thus lamented her fate, Cauchon entered the dungeon. Turning on him, she cried: 'I lay my death at your door; for had you placed me in the prison of

the Church, this cruel death would not have befallen me, and I make you responsible to God for my death.'

Then, turning away from the Bishop, she appeared more calm, and, addressing one of the judges who had followed Cauchon into the prison, exclaimed:

'Master Peter'—the man's name was Peter Maurice—'where shall I be this evening?'

'Have you not good hope in God's mercy?' he answered.

'Yes,' said Joan; 'and by His grace I hope to be in Paradise.'

Cauchon and the others having left her alone with Martin Ladvenu, she made her confession to him, and when that was finished she begged that the Sacrament might be administered to her. Without Cauchon's leave Ladvenu did not dare to obtain this supreme consolation for the martyr.

He despatched a messenger to the Bishop, who, after consulting with some of the clergy, gave his permission. In the meanwhile, the city had heard that the day of the Maid of Orleans' execution had come, and the people crowded about the neighbourhood of the castle. In spite of the English soldiery, the people did not conceal their grief and dismay on learning that the heroine was so soon to perish. The Eucharist was brought into the prison, but without the usual accompaniments of candle, stole, and surplice. These 'maimed rights' raised the indignation of the priest Martin, and he indignantly refused to proceed with the ceremony until lights and stole were brought. During the time in which Joan of Arc was receiving the Sacrament, those persons who had been admitted within the castle recited the litany for the departing soul, and never had the mournful invocation for the dying, the supplication of the solemn chant, '_Kyrie eleison! Christe eleison!_' been raised from a more tragic place, or on a more heart-stirring occa-295

sion. Outside, in the street, and all around the prison gates, knelt the weeping people, fervently praying, and earnestly invoking the Almighty and

His saints for her who was about to lay down her young life in their behalf. ‘Christ have pity!

Saint Margaret have pity! Pray for her, all ye saints, archangels, and blessed martyrs, pray for her! Saints and angels intercede for her! From Thy wrath, good Lord, deliver her! O, Lord God, save her! Have mercy on her, we beseech thee, good Lord!’ The poor, helpless people had nothing but their prayers to give Joan of Arc; but these we may believe were not unavailing. There are few more pathetic events recorded in history than this weeping, helpless, praying crowd, holding their lighted candles, and kneeling, on the pavement, beneath the prison walls of the old fortress.

It was about nine o’clock when they placed on Joan of Arc a long white shirt, such as criminals wore at their execution, and on her head they set a mitre-shaped paper cap, on which the words ‘heretic, relapsed, apostate, idolatress,’

were written.

This was the head-dress which the victims of the Inquisition carried, and in which they were burnt.

When Joan of Arc was taken forth to die, there mounted with her on to the cart the two priests, Martin Ladvenu and Isambard. Eight hundred English troops lined the road by which the death-cart and its load passed from the castle to the old market-place; they were armed with staves and with axes. These soldiers, as the victim passed, fell into line behind the cart, and kept off with their staves the crowd, eager to show its sympathy for Joan.

Suddenly, when as yet the procession had gone but a short distance, a man pushed his way through the crowd and the soldiers, and threw himself at Joan of Arc’s feet, imploring her forgiveness.

It was the priest Loiseleur, Joan’s confessor and betrayer. Roughly thrown back by the men-at-arms, Loiseleur disappeared in the throng, but not before Joan had bestowed her pardon on him. On the old market-place—where now not a single building remains which witnessed the tragedy of that day—was a wide space, surrounded by picturesquely gabled and high-roofed houses,

like those which still survive in the old Norman capital, and within a short distance of the churches of Saint Sauveur and Saint Michel, now destroyed. Two tribunes had been raised on either side of the square. Between this, placed high on a stage of masonry, stood the pile. A placard affixed in front of this pile bore a long inscription, beginning thus: 'Joan, known as the Maid' ... and ending with a cumbrous list of 296

epithets, among which 'apostate' and 'schismatic' were the least abusive.

Pending the final act, a monk named Nicolas Midi was ordered by Cauchon to address the prisoner and those present. The Bishop's words have come down to us.

'For your admonition,' he began, 'and for the edification of all those present, a learned discourse will now be delivered by the distinguished doctor, Nicolas Midi'; and the distinguished doctor then took for his text, from the first Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthans, twelfth chapter, the words: 'If one member suffereth,'

etc.

The gist of his sermon was to prove that it was necessary, in order to prevent others falling into sin, that the guilty member should be removed. Strange, indeed, how often the words of Scripture have been used and mis-used in excuse, or in vindication, of the most atrocious cruelties by so-called Christans, profess-ing to preach the religion of mercy, of forgiveness, and of humanity.

The sermon being finished, the preacher addressed Joan of Arc in the following words: 'Joan, the Church, wishing to prevent infection, casts you from her.

She no longer protects you. Depart in peace!'

Then Cauchon took up his text, which was to the effect that Joan, 'by renouncing her abjuration, had returned as the dog of Scripture did to its vomit; for which cause we, Peter, by the divine mercy Bishop of Beauvais,

and brother John LemaItre, vicar of the very reverend doctor John Graverent Inquisitor of the heretical evil [especally retained by Cauchon in the present case], have by a just judgment, declared you, Joan, commonly styled the Maid, fallen back into diverse errors and crimes, schismatical, idolatrous, and guilty of other sins in great number. For these causes we declare you fallen back into your former errors, and by the sentence of excommunication under which you were already found guilty we declare you to be heretical and relapsed; and we declare that you, as a decayed member, to prevent the contagion from spreading to others, are cast from the unity of the Church, and given over to the secular power. We reject, we cast you off, and we abandon you, praying that, beyond death and the mutilation of your limbs, the Church treats you with moderation.'

These last words were the usual formula used by the Inquisition when its victims were about to be committed to the flames. Joan of Arc meanwhile was praying fervently; and when Cauchon had finished speaking, she humbly begged those around her to pray for her. Her tears, her fervour, and her submission, over-297

came the feelings even of her judges.

Winchester was seen to weep, and a great wave of pity swept over the immense confused crowd; for her enemies as well as her friends among the people were all more or less under its influence.

In her prayers the heroine implored the Divine Mercy to pardon those from whom she had suffered so much. 'Pray for me in your churches,' she said to the priests—to those priests and to the Church that had deserted and condemned her; for in spite of all that she had endured at the hands of those Churchmen, Joan of Arc remained to the end as fervent and loyal a Churchwoman as she had been throughout her life.

One thing she missed. Turning to Massieu, she asked him if he had a cross.

He had not, nor could one be found; but an Englishman broke his stave into two pieces, and these tied together formed a rude cross.

This cross Joan took, and placed it against her heart; but she still wanted a consecrated cross to be held before her while struggling in the flames, and this was at length obtained by the priest Isambard, who fetched one from the adjacent Church of Saint Sauveur.

Meanwhile the English soldiers began to grumble at the length of these preparations: 'Do they expect us to dine here?' they growled.

As soon as the cross from the church had been placed in her hands, she devoutly kissed it, invoking God and her saints to assist her in this the heaviest of her needs, when all human help had abandoned her.

The heroine appears to have been then seized by the English sergeants-at-arms, and given by them into the charge of the executioners; and while she was being led to the foot of the high pile of clay and wood—the instrument of her martyrdom—the men-at-arms surrounded and roughly handled their prisoner. The scene had become so poignant that many of the judges left their tribune, unable to endure the sight of that white-robed and helpless figure in the midst of the brutal soldiers hounding her on to her death. It must indeed have been a ghastly spectacle, even for men accustomed to scenes of savage brutality and cruelty. At length she was delivered from her tormentors, and, preceded by the executioner, she mounted the ladder, and was bound round the body by a chain attached to the stake.

The good priest, Isambard, closely followed her, and stood immedately beneath her, with the cross held and raised towards Joan, who but once removed her gaze from off it.

'Keep it,' she said to Isambard, 'keep it always before my eyes, till death.'

Then she took a last look around her—a last look on a world which had been so harsh and cruel a world to her, poor victim of all the powers of evil on this earth! She looked but once on the surging crowd beneath, at the old timbered houses of the town, filled from basement to high-peaked roof, with thousands of its citizens. 'O, Rouen, Rouen!' she cried, 'must I die here? I have great fear lest you will suffer for my death.' And with that she put away from her all earthly things, and gave herself up to Heaven. In the interval the executioners had lighted the lower portion of the pile of wood, and the fire, fed by the pitch-covered fagots, mounted rapidly.

Joan of Arc gave a cry of terror, and called aloud for 'Water, holy water!'

The body had for an instant conquered the spirit—but it was only for an instant.

At that moment Cauchon had the inconceivable and apparently devil-driven curiosity to approach the martyr, hoping, perhaps, that in the first terror at seeing the fire springing up to her, Joan of Arc would let fall some words of reproach against her King or her saints.

'Joan,' he cried through the crackling of the flames, 'I have come to exhort you for the last time.'

'I die through you,' she said, as she had said once before, and then she was allowed to die in peace, so far as Cauchon and his Church were concerned. For her all earthly things were now over. Till the last sign of life expired the eye-witnesses who have given us the fullest account of her last moments—

the priests Isambard and Massieu—declared that she continued to call on her God and on her saints. Frequently through the blinding smoke and the fierce rush of flame her face looked that of a blessed saint uplifted and radant.

With one loud cry of ‘Jesus!’ her head fell on her breast.

Thus came Joan of Arc to her glorious end.

There is a tradition that when the ashes of the martyr Maid were gathered to be cast into the Seine, the heart was found unconsumed—_Cor cordium!_

Many other traditions are related regarding her death, but none with much certainty. The executioner is said to have come later on that day to Isambard in an agony of grief. He confessed himself, and told Isambard that he felt Heaven would never pardon him for the part he had taken in killing a saint. The poor fellow's responsibility for her death was really not greater than that of the fagots and the flames which had destroyed her life. On Cauchon and his gang of judges, lay and clerical—on the University of Paris and the Catholic Church—on Winchester and the English, noble and simple, who had sold and bought the glorious Maid, the crime of her martyrdom will ever rest, and surely no other crime but one in the world's history can be paralleled with it.

Twenty years after the events which I have attempted to describe, an act of tardy justice was accorded to Joan of Arc. Charles VII. at length felt it necessary, more for his own interest than for any care of the memory of Joan of Arc, to have a revision made of the iniquitous condemnation of the heroine.

This King, even if unable to rescue the Maid of Orleans from her captors, might at least have attempted her release, yet during all the time—over a year—

of her imprisonment he had not even made a sign in her behalf.

There does not exist in the documents of the time a trace of any negotation, of the smallest offer made to obtain her exchange by prisoners or by ransom, or of any wish to effect her release. But Charles was anxious on his own account, when France had almost wholly been gained back to its allegance, that his coronation at Rheims should not be imputed to the actions and to the aid of one whom the French clergy and the French judges had condemned and executed as a heretic and apostate. Hence the vast judical inquiry set on foot by the King to vindicate the fame of her whom the English and the Anglo-French had hoped, through the condemnation pronounced by

Cauchon in the name of the Church, to vilify, and through her, by her tral, condemnation, and death, to discredit Charles and his coronation.

On the 15th of February, 1450, Charles VII. declared that Joan of Arc's enemies had destroyed her 'against reason'—so ran the formula—'and very cruelly,' and that it was his, the King's, intention 'to obtain the truth regarding this affair.'

Pope Nicolas V. made difficulties. Cardinal d'Estouteville, who had undertaken to manage the process of rehabilitation, presented the Pope with a claim for a revision of the sentence of condemnation in the name of Joan of Arc's mother 300

and of her two brothers. The petition ran thus: 'The brothers, mother, and relations of Joan, anxious that her memory and their own should be cleansed from this unmerited disgrace, demand that the sentence of condemnation that was given at Rouen shall be annulled.' Not, however, until the death of Pope Nicolas V., and the accession of Calixtus III., was anything further done.

The new Pope (Alfonso Borga) did not hesitate as to the line he intended taking in the matter, and he gave his sanction to the rehabilitation of the heroine by a rescript dated the 11th of June, 1455. It was as follows:—

'We, Calixtus, servant of the servants of God, accord a favourable ear to the request which has been made us. There has lately been brought before us on the part of Peter and John of Arc, also of Isabella of Arc, their mother, and some of their relations, a petition stating that their sister, daughter, and relative, Joan of Arc deceased, had been unjustly condemned as guilty of the crime of heresy and other crimes against the Faith, on the false testimony of the late Willam [John, it should be] d'Estivet of the Episcopal Court of Beauvais, and of Peter of happy memory, at that time Bishop of Beauvais, and of the late John LemaItre, belonging to the Inquisition. The nullity of their proceedings and the innocence of Joan are clearly established both by documents and further by clearest proofs. In consequence of this, the brothers, mother, and relatives of Joan are therefore at liberty to cast off the

mark of infamy with which this tral has falsely stamped them; and thus they have humbly supplicated our permission to authorise and to proceed in this tral of rehabilitation.'

The prelates selected by the Pope as commissioners to follow the course of the tral of rehabilitation were John Jouvenel des Ursins, Archbishop of Rheims, Willam Chartrier, Bishop of Paris, and Richard de Longueil, Bishop of Coutances.

On the 7th of November, 1455, this tral was solemnly begun in the Church of Notre Dame, in Paris.

It has been said that Joan of Arc's father died of grief on hearing of his daughter's martyrdom. He was certainly dead before the date of this tral. However, the now aged mother of Joan of Arc, Isabella RomEe d'Arc, in her sixty-seventh year, was there. She was supported by her two sons, John and Peter, and was accompanied by many of her relations from Vaucouleurs, and friends from Orleans. The poor soul appears to have been much affected when she appeared before the sympathetic crowd. Many of those present must have come from far to see the mother of the famous heroine claiming at the hands of the Church the vindication of her daughter's fame.

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Two meetings took place at Notre Dame, and a third was held at Rouen, at which the family of Joan of Arc were unable to be present—the mother from illness, and the brothers by affairs at home. The Procureur, whose name was PrEvosteau, was the advocate for the Arc family. The debates lasted all through the winter, and into the early part of the year 1456. During the debates a hundred articles were drawn up and agreed to, relating to the life, death, and tral of the heroine. None of these are of much importance or interest.

It was not until the witnesses of Joan of Arc's life at home, and of her actions abroad, gave their testimony that the debates became interesting. Then began to pass before the eyes of the spectators a succession of people who had known Joan of Arc, and who had taken part in the same actions as those of the Maid—peasants from her native village, townsfolk from Orleans, generals and soldiers who had ridden with her into battle and fought by her side.

In fact, here appeared all sorts and conditions of men, from farm labourers to princes of the blood royal. The testimony of these people helps one to follow the life of Joan of Arc throughout its short career with something like precision.

The sittings of the commissioners took place at Paris, Orleans, Rouen, and also at Domremy. It may be said without exaggeration that the whole of France and all its classes seemed, after an interval of a quarter of a century, to raise its voice in honour of the memory of its martyr Maid, and to attest to the spotless and noble life of her country's saviour.

At Domremy, at Vaucouleurs, and at Toul, thirty-four witnesses were heard on the 28th of January and on the 11th of February, 1456. At Orleans, during the months of February and of March, forty-one depositions were collected by the Archbishop of Rheims.

In Paris, in April and May, the same prelate, assisted by the Bishop of Paris, heard the evidence of twenty witnesses. At Rouen, the same commission heard nineteen others. Finally, at Lyons, the deposition of Joan of Arc's esquire, d'Aulon, who had attended her throughout her campaigns, was made before the Vice-Inquisitor of that province, John DesprAs.

All these depositions are recorded in Latin, the only exception being that of d'Aulon, which was taken down in French. All those written in Latin have been translated into French by M. Fabre, and published in his _ProcAs de REhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc_.

Among the witnesses first appear the friends and neighbours of Joan of Arc

in her childhood and early years. From her birthplace came her greatest friends, Henriette, Mengette, and Isabellette. The first of these, in the year 1456, was aged forty-five, the second was a year older, and the third was in her fiftieth year. All three were the wives of labourers. Henriette was married to Gerard, Mengette to John Joyart, and Isabellette to Gerardin d'Epinal. To the child of the last Joan had stood god-mother. Next came from the same village three older women, all three being god-mothers to Joan. In those days the French peasantry seem to have had an almost unlimited number of god-fathers and god-mothers. These were named Jeannette, widow of ThEpelin de Viteau, aged sixty; Jeannette ThEverien, aged sixty-six; and Beatrix, widow of d'Estelin, a labourer of Domremy, then in her eighti-eth year.

After these three god-mothers, came to give their evidence her god-fathers. Four of these appear—John Rainguesson, John Barrey, John de Langart, and John Morel de Greux. Of these four god-fathers, only the last one seems to have been called to give evidence; he was in his seventieth year. Gerardin d'Epinal, husband of one of the god-mothers, also gave his evidence; it was his son Nicolas for whom Joan of Arc had stood sponsor. In those days it was held that the god-mother of a child stood to it in the relation of a second mother: hence originated the term of 'commAre' and 'compAre,' which Joan gave the d'Epinals.

Six labourers, who had been playmates with Joan in childhood, then came forward. These men, named respectively Le Cuin, Guillemeth, Waterin, Colin, Masnier, and Jacquard, were between the ages of forty-four and fifty. All these humbly born witnesses agreed in their answers to the twelve questions asked them in the following order:—

1. When and where was Joan born?

2. Who were her parents? Were they of good character and of good re-pute?

3. Who were her god-fathers?

4. Was she piously brought up?

5. How did she conduct herself between her seventh year up to the time she left her home?

6. Did she often frequent the churches and places of devotion of her free-will?

7. How did she occupy herself, and what were her duties?

8. Did she confess often?

9. Did she frequent the fairies' tree and the haunted well, and did she go to places with the other young people of the neighbourhood?

10. How did she leave her home, and how did she accomplish her journey?

11. Were any investigations made in her native country at the time she was taken prisoner?

12. Did Joan on one occasion escape to Neufchateau on account of a military raid, and was she then in the company of her parents?

We now arrive at a higher grade in the ranks of the witnesses, in the shape of 'l'honorable homme Nicolas Bailly.' Bailly was a man of sixty; he had been employed by the English in 1430, and by Cauchon—he was a scrivener (_tabellion_) by profession—to make investigations into the character of Joan in her native place.

Then came the old bell-ringer of Joan of Arc's village—Perrin le Drassier, aged sixty. He told how the maiden loved the sound of the church bells, and how she would blame him when he neglected ringing them, and of her little gifts to him to make him more diligent in his office. After the bell-ringer came three priests—all belonging to the neighbourhood of Domremy. The first—namely, the

'discrAte personne Messire Henri Arnolin'—belonged to Gondrecourt-le-Château, near to Commercy, and was sixty-four. The next is the 'venerable personne Messire Etienne de Sionne,' curate of the parish church at Raucessey-sous-Neufchateau, aged fifty-four; and the third was named Dominic Jocab, curate of the parish church of Moutier-sur-Saulx.

Next came an old peasant from Domremy, named Bertrand LaclopssE, a thatcher by profession, ninety years of age; after him three neighbours of Joan's father—Thevenin le Royer, seventy years old; Jacquier, sixty; and John Moen, wheelwright, fifty-six. But a far more important witness than any of the preceding three-and-twenty was the uncle of the heroine, Durand Laxart, farm labourer at Burey-le-Petit, whom, it will be remembered, Joan first took into her confidence regarding her voices and her mission. Laxart was then in his sixtieth year. At the close of his evidence he states that all he had said regarding his niece he had also told Charles VII.—probably at the time of the coronation, for Laxart was then at 304

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Rheims. Laxart was followed by the couple with whom Joan of Arc lodged when living at Vaucouleurs, Henry and Joan le Royer (or le Charron). After this worthy pair appeared the two brave knights who had guarded the Maid of Orleans during her perilous journey to Chinon—John de Novelem-hont, commonly called John de Metz, aged fifty-seven, and the other, named Bertrand de Poulangy—one of the King's esquires—aged sixty-three.

Three other knights were heard after them—namely, Albert d'Ourche, from Ourche, near Commercy, aged sixty; Geoffrey du Fay, aged fifty; and Louis de Martigny, living at Martigny-les-Gerboneaux, a village near Neufchateau, aged fifty-four. These were followed by two curates and a sergeant. 'DiscrAte personne Messire Jean le Fumeux,' of Vaucouleurs, canon of the Church of Sainte Marie in that village, also curate of the parish church of d'Ugny, aged only thirty-eight, was, as he admitted, a mere child when Joan of Arc came to Vaucouleurs; but he remembered distinctly having seen her praying in the church at Vaucouleurs, and kneeling for a long time in the subterranean chapel of Sainte Marie's Church before an image of the Blessed Virgin.

The other priest, named John Colin, was the curate of the parish church of Domremy, and a canon of the collegate church of Saint Nicolas de Brixey, near Vaucouleurs. His age was sixty-six. The last of these thirty-four witnesses was the sergeant, Guillot Jacquier, aged thirty-six: why he was called as a witness does not appear. As a child he had heard Joan of Arc spoken of as 'une brave fille, de bonne renommEe, et de conduite honnÍte,'

which opinion was the general one given in their evidence by all the other witnesses, whose names only we have been able to give.

Relating to the period in the life of the heroine between the time of the King's coronation and that of her capture, the facts told by the various persons examined are few and far between. In the tral for the rehabilitation of the Maid of Orleans, the story of her deeds in the field was not of much importance to the commissioners. What they principally desired to ascertain was the fact that no taint of heresy could attach to the life of the heroine. It was for this reason that all those persons who could throw any light upon Joan's early days and the actions of her childhood had been collected to give their evidence. We now come to those witnesses who were examined regarding the life of Joan of Arc after her interview with the King at Chinon and about the stirring events which immedately followed that interview. The first of these is the 'nobile et savant homme Messire Simon Charles,' Master of the Requests (_MaItre des requÍtes_) in the year 1429. He had been president of the State exchequer in 1456, and was aged sixty. Simon's evidence is of interest and importance both as regards Joan of Arc's arrival at Chinon, 305

and also with respect to the siege of Orleans and the triumphant entry into Rheims.

The next witness was one of the clergy who examined Joan when at Poitiers; this was a preaching frar from Limousin who had asked Joan of Arc in what language her saints spoke to her, and had been answered by 'In a better language than yours'—for this good frar, whose name was Brother Sequier, spoke with a strong Limousin accent. When he was giving his evidence before the commission (in 1456) he was an old man in his seventy-third year, and head of the theological college of Poitiers.

Next to him came the evidence given by the 'venerable et savant homme MaItre Jean Barbier, docteur As lois.' Barbier was King's-Advocate in the House of Parlament, and had also been one of the judges at Joan of Arc's examination at Poitiers: he was aged fifty. Barbier had been at Loches when

the people threw themselves before Joan of Arc's horse, and embraced the heroine's feet and hands.

Barbier reproved her for allowing them to do so. He told her that if she permitted them to act thus it would render them idolatrous in their worship of her, to which reprimand Joan answered, 'Indeed, without God's help I could not prevent them from becoming so.'

Another of the Poitiers witnesses was Gobert Thibault, also aged fifty. This Thibault had been at Chinon when Joan arrived there, and had followed her to Orleans. Among these Poitiers witnesses was Francis Garivel, aged forty. Garivel, when a lad of fifteen, had seen Joan at Poitiers, and he remembered that on her being asked why she styled Charles Dauphin, and not by his kingly title, she replied that she could not give him his regal title until he had been crowned and anointed at Rheims.

The collected testimony of the above witnesses, whose evidence covers the time passed by Joan at Poitiers, was submitted to Charles VII., and the MSS.

exist in the National Library in Paris. It has been edited by the historans Bachon and Quicherat, and translated from the Latin into French by Fabre.

The next batch of witnesses' evidence concerns the fighting period of Joan of Arc's life, and consists principally of the testimony given by her companions in her different campaigns, and this appears to us by far the most interesting and curious.

Of those witnesses the first to testify was a prince of the blood, Joan of Arc's

'beau Duc,' as she loved to call John, Duke of Alencon. He is thus styled in the original document: 'Illustris ac potentissimus princeps et dominus.'

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Alencon came of a truly noble line of ancestors, and was descended also from brave warriors. His great-grandfather fell at Crecy, leading the vanguard of the French host. His grandfather was the companion-in-arms of the great Du Guesclin. His father, on the field of Agincourt, after having wounded the Duke of York and stricken him to the ground, crossed swords with King Harry, and then, overwhelmed by numbers, had fallen under a rain of blows.

With Dunois (Bastard of Orleans) Alencon is one of the most prominent of the French leaders who appear in Shakespeare's play, in the first part of Henry VI.

Duke John, like his illustrious forebears, had also fought and bled for his country.

His first campaign was made when he was but eighteen. Alencon first saw Joan of Arc in 1429. A strong mutual regard sprang up between the prince and the Maid of Domremy. Alencon had wedded the daughter of the Duke of Orleans, and it was to her that the heroine, when she left with the Duke for their expedition against Paris, promised to bring back her husband in safety.

No one had seen more of Joan of Arc during those days of fighting than had Alencon, and no one bore a higher testimony than did the Duke to her purity, her courage, and the sublime simplicity of her character. It was the Duke of Alencon who was especally struck with the skill shown by the heroine in warlike matters; particularly in her science in the management of artillery—ridiculously rude as that branch of the service appears to us.

'Everybody,' Alencon says, 'was amazed to see that in all that appertained to warfare she acted with as much knowledge and capacity as if she had been twenty or thirty years trained in the art of war.'

Next to Alencon's evidence came that of the famous Bastard of Orleans, the Count de Dunois, one of the most engaging and sympathetic figures of the whole age of chivalry. John of Orleans was the natural son of the Duke of Orleans, and, as Fabre says of him, he 'glorified the appellation of Bastard.' Indeed, the Bastard's name deserves to be handed down in his country's annals with as much glory as that of his great English rival and foe, Talbot, in those of the English. He was a consummate soldier, who even at the early age of twenty-three had brillantly distinguished himself, and he lived to liberate Normandy and Guyenne from the English.

Well may M. Fabre, in his book on the rehabilitation of Joan of Arc, express his regret that Dunois' evidence was not set forth in the language in which it was delivered, and that it has come down to us weakened by translation into Latin.

What is worse is that we have only the translation of a translation.

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Dunois had, besides his high military reputation, that of being skilled in oratory. There is, however, in the translation more than a trace of the enthusasm with which Dunois speaks of the deeds of the heroic maiden. Dunois, Bastard of Orleans as he is always called, bore the following titles, as recited by the chronicler: 'l'illustrieuse prince Jean Comte de Dunois et de Longueville, lieutenant-general de notre seigneur le roi.' He was fifty-one years old in the month of February, 1456. His deposition extends over the entire period of the life of Joan of Arc between the time of her arrival before Orleans and the period of the King's coronation.

Dunois' evidence closes thus:—'To conclude, it was habitual to Joan to speak playfully on matters relating to war, in order to cheer the soldiers, and she may have alluded to many military events which never were to take place. But I declare that, when she spoke seriously about the war, of her deeds, and of her vocation, she said her work was limited to raising the siege of Orleans, to succouring the unhappy people shut up in that town and in its suburbs, and to leading the King to Rheims for his coronation and anointing.'

Next we have the testimony of the noble knight, Raoul de Gaucourt, who had so stoutly defended Orleans during its long siege. De Gaucourt was eighty-five years old. This fine old warrior's evidence confirms all that Dunois had said in praise of Joan of Arc.

The next to appear was the heroine's page, Louis de Contes, aged fifteen when appointed to attend on Joan of Arc: at the time of the trial of her rehabilitation he was forty-two.

Next came a very interesting witness, to wit, Joan of Arc's almoner, 'venerable et religieux personne Jean Pasquerel.' This worthy priest had been formerly in a Tours monastery. We do not find his age given at this time. The clear graphic testimony of this good man is a pleasure to read. His love and admiration for the heroine appear in every line of his testimony,

and although this narrative is already too long, it will not perhaps be considered tedious if some of his evidence is quoted.

'When I first had tidings,' he says, 'of Joan of Arc and of her arrival at Court, I was at Puy, where at that time were her mother and some people who had accompanied her to Chinon. Having come to me, they said, "You must come with us and see Joan; we will not allow you to leave us until you have seen her." So I went with them to Chinon, and also to Tours. At that time I was reader in a convent in 308

that town. When she came to Tours, Joan lived in the house of John Dupuy, a burgher of that place. It was there that I first met her. "Joan," they said to her, "we have brought this good father to see you. When you know him well you will like him very much." And Joan answered them and said, "The good father pleases me much; I have heard about him already, and I will make my confession to him to-morrow."

'And I heard her confession on the day following, when I also sang the Mass before her. Since that I have always followed Joan, and I remained her chaplain till the time of her capture at Compagne.'

It was in this good priest's evidence that the touching trait of Joan of Arc's fondness for gathering children about her was made known. 'She confessed nearly every day,' he said, 'and took the Sacrament often. When near any community of begging frars she asked me to remind her of the days on which the beggar children received the Eucharist, so that she might receive it at the same time with them. It was her delight,' he said, 'to take the Sacrament along with the poor mendicant children. She shed tears often at confession.'

Later on in his evidence Pasquerel adds to the above, 'that often at night I have seen her kneeling, praying for her King and for the success of her mission. I certainly,' he said, 'firmly believed in the divine source of her mission, for she was always engaged in good works, and she was full of every good quality. During a campaign when provisions ran short Joan would never take that which had been gained by pillage. To the wounded

she was ever pitiful—to the English as well as to those of her own country, and she always tried to get them to make their confession, if badly, and even if only slightly, wounded. The fear of God was ever before her, nor would she for anything in the world do anything which she considered contrary to His will: for instance, when she was wounded in the shoulder by the dart from a crossbow, when some people wished her to allow the wound to be charmed, promising that if she had it done her hurt would be healed, Joan said that to do so would be a sin, and that she would sooner die than commit one.

'I am greatly surprised,' continued the unsophisticated old priest, 'that such great lawyers (*grands clercs*) as were those at Rouen could have sentenced Joan to death. How could they put to death that poor child, who was such a good and such a simple Christan, and that too, so cruelly, without a reason—for surely they had not sufficient reason at any rate to kill her!'

Pasquerel could evidently not grasp the real reason for the part played by Cauchon in the execution of the Maid of Orleans, or imagine that in order to obtain an archbishopric his beloved Joan had been condemned by the Bishop of 309

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Beauvais to the flames. Pasquerel's evidence ends thus:—

'I have nothing more to add except this. On several occasions Joan told me that if she were to die, she hoped our lord the King would found chantries in which the Almighty might be entreated in intercession for the souls of those who had been slain in the defence of the kingdom.'

The next witness is John d'Aulon, knight, Seneschal of Beaucaire, member of the King's Council. It was he who had served Joan of Arc as esquire during all her campaigns. His evidence is of importance, as it proves clearly the grounds on which the tral of rehabilitation was held—namely, to clear the King of having been crowned and anointed through the agency of one condemned by the Church as an apostate and heretic. The Archbishop thus wrote to d'Aulon on the 20th of April, 1456:—

‘By the sentence pronounced against Joan the English wish it to be believed that the Maid was a sorceress, a heretic, and in league with the devil, and therefore that the King had received his kingdom by those means; and thus they hold as heretics the King and those that have served him.’

Nothing can be clearer than this declaration, or show better the real object for which that utterly selfish prince, Charles VII., had, after the lapse of a quarter of a century since the death of Joan of Arc, instituted these proceedings—not at all in order to do honour to the heroine’s memory, but in order that his position as King of France should not be tainted with the heresy which had been charged to the account of Joan by and through the clergy and French doctors of theology and learning.

D’Aulon’s evidence is one of the most complete of the entire set of testimonies. It was given, not at Rouen, but at Lyons, in 1456, before the Vice-Inquisitor, John DesprAs.

His depositions are remarkable in this, that, unlike those of the other witnesses, they are recorded in French, and not in Latin.

Next to d’Aulon succeeds, in the chain of witnesses, Simon Beaucroix, aged fifty. Simon was a youth at Chinon when Joan of Arc came there. Beaucroix’s evidence is followed by that of John Luillier, a citizen of Orleans. He bore evidence to the immense popularity of the Maid during and after the siege of Orleans. At the time of the tral of rehabilitation Luillier was fifty. To the part played by the Maid at the siege of his native town he speaks thus:—

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‘As to the question you put me, whether I think the siege of Orleans was raised and the town saved from the enemy by the intervention and the ministration (ministare) of the Maid, even more than by the force of arms, this is my answer: All my fellow citizens, as well as I myself, believe that had the Maid not come there by the will of God to our rescue, we should very soon, both town and people, have been in the power of the besiegers. It is my belief,’ he adds, ‘that it was impossible for the people of Orleans and for the army present at Orleans to have held out much longer against the superior strength of the enemy.’

More people from Orleans next gave their evidence: viz. Willam le Charron, John Volant, Willam Postan, Denis Roger, James de Thou, John Canelier, Aignan de Saint-Mesmin, John Hilaire, Jacques l’Esbalny, CosmE de Commy, John de Champcoux, Peter Hue, Peter Jonqualt, John Aubert, Willam Rouillart, Gentien Cabu, Peter Vaillant, John Beaucharnys, John Coulon. All these men were burghers of the town, and their ages varied between forty and seventy. All agreed with Luillier in their belief that, under God, it was Joan of Arc who rescued their city from the English.

Following these men we now come to the evidence of some of the women who had seen or known the heroine. First of these is Joan, wife of Gilles de Saint-Mesmin, aged seventy. She says: ‘The general opinion was and is still at Orleans that Joan was a good Catholic—simple, humble, and of a holy life.’ Such, too, is the opinion of Joan, the wife of Guy Boyleau, and of Guillemette, wife of John de Coulon; also of the widow of John de Mouchy. All these agree with the first lady’s testimony.

We have next the evidence of the daughter of James Boucher, the treasurer of Orleans, at whose house Joan of Arc lodged while in Orleans. Charlotte Boucher had married Willam Houet. When her deposition was taken in 1456 she was thirty-six years old, and consequently only nine when Joan lodged at her father’s house.

However, young as she was then, the visit of the Maid had left a great memory behind; she had been Joan's bed-fellow.

'Often,' she says, 'Joan said to my mother, "Hope in God, for He will deliver the town of Orleans, and drive the enemy away."'

And last we find the evidence of two good wives of Orleans, one widow of John HurE, the other PetronillE, wife of Beaucharnys. After these came six clerics, canons of the Church of Saint Aignan at Orleans—Robert de Farcaux, Peter Compaing, Peter de la Censurey, Raoul Godert, HervE Bonart, and AndrE Bordez.

Peter Milet and his wife, Colette, were also witnesses. All had known Joan when she was at Orleans, as had Aignan Viole, an advocate of Parlament, who had been in Orleans during the siege.

The ‘noble homme Guillaume de Richarville, panetier de la cour,’ gave his evidence, relating to Joan of Arc’s appearance at Court, as also did an old Court physican named Reginald Thierry; it is he who relates how, at the capture of Saint Pierre-le-Moutier, Joan prevented its church from being pillaged.

A doughty warrior follows, namely, ‘noble et prudent Seigneur le cheva-lier Thibauld d’Armagnac, Sire de Thermes, Bailli de Chartres.’ D’Armagnac was fifty years old; he had followed Joan of Arc all through her campaign, and, like Alencon, had a very high opinion of her military talents. At the close of his evidence, he says: ‘In the manner of the conduct and ordering of troops, in that of placing them in battle array, and of animating the men, Joan of Arc had as much capacity for these things as the most accomplished captain in the art of war.’

After the soldier, the peasant. This peasant, or rather mechanic, is a cop-persmith named Husson Lemaitre. Lemaitre hailed from Domremy. Being in the year 1456 at Rouen, he then and there gave his evidence. He had known Joan of Arc’s family, and Joan too in her childhood; of all of them he spoke most highly.

Next comes ‘honnite et prude femme demoiselle Marguerite la Tournelle,’

the widow of Réné de Bouligny. It was at her house at Bourges that Joan lodged after the coronation at Rheims.

We now pass to an entirely different category of witnesses. These are the men who sat in the tral of the heroine. One can well understand the embarrass-ment shown by such folk in their replies to the questions they had

to answer, and their wish if it were possible to turn the responsibility of their previous judgment on the heads of those who were no longer in this world to answer the charges made against them.

The first of these men is 'venerable et savante personne MaItre Thomas de Courcelles.' De Courcelles was only fifty-six in 1456, when called on to make his deposition as to the part he had played in the heroine's tral at Rouen, five-and-twenty years before. His evidence is full of the feeblest argument, and his memory appears to have been a very convenient one, as he repeatedly evades an answer by the plea of having forgotten all about the incident alluded to.

Next follows that 'venerable et circonspecte personne, Maitre Jean 312

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Beaupare'—a doctor of theology, and canon of Rouen, Paris, and Besancon. This circumspect person was now in his seventieth year. He laid most of the blame of Joan of Arc's death upon the English, and the rest on Cauchon. The English being away, and Cauchon dead, the circumspection of this doctor's evidence is evident.

We next have that of the Bishop of Noyon, John de Mailly. This bishop had been in the service of the English King, but had, when Charles became prosper-ous, returned to him. In 1456 he was aged sixty. An intimate of the Prince Cardinal of Winchester, and one of the foremost of the judges who condemned Joan of Arc to death, his deposition in 1456 is quite a study in the art of trying to convince people that black is white. He had shown some kind of feeling of humanity at the time of the martyrdom of the Maid, and had left that scene of horror early. To the memory of his old friend and colleague, Cauchon, he gives a parting kick by saying at the close of his examination that of one thing he was quite certain, and that was that Cauchon received money for the conduct of the tral from his friends, the English. But he might have now been reminded that he too had received some of this blood-money.

Next to appear is another French bishop, Monseigneur Jean Le Favre, Evique in partibus de Demetrade. This prelate was in his seventieth year. At

the time of Joan of Arc's tral he was professor of theology of the order of hermit monks of Saint Augustins. The Bishop had taken an active part in the tral and condemnation. Like his brother bishop, Le FAvre enjoyed a very convenient memory, and had quite forgotten many things of importance which occurred during the tral in 1430. Nor did he even take part as a spectator in the martyrdom which he had helped to bring about—'I left before the end,' he said, 'not feeling the strength to see more.' Let that shred of humanity in the composition of priests like him be allowed before we entirely condemn them.

The next witness is also a Churchman, Peter Migiet, the prior of Longueville, aged seventy. He also had been one of Cauchon's crawling creatures. There is little of interest in his evidence, except the passage where he says that an English knight had told him that the English feared Joan of Arc more than a hundred soldiers, and that her very name was a source of terror to the foe. Although this sounds an exaggerated statement, it is not so, as is proved by an edict having been issued by the English Government in the May of 1430, in which English officers and soldiers who refused to enter France for fear of 'the enchantments of the Maid'

were threatened with severe punishment. There is, moreover, an edict, bearing the date of December 1430, which was also issued by the English military authorities, describing the tral and the punishment by court martal of all soldiers who had deserted the army in France from fear of Joan of Arc.

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After the above priests, on whom rests the infamy of having taken part in the death of the heroine, it is a relief to find the next witness, although a Churchman, a man of sufficient honesty and courage to have been one of those few who refused to take any part in the iniquitous proceedings connected with Joan of Arc's tral, and who suffered imprisonment owing to his unwillingness to carry out Cauchon's wishes. This worthy priest was named Nicolas de Houppeville, a doctor of theology, now in his sixty-fifth year.

The next witness is John Tiphanie, a canon of the Sainte Chapelle of Paris.

He was also a doctor in medicine. Tiphanie had been compelled much against his inclination to take part in the tral of Joan. He was one of the doctors who were sent to see her when she lay ill in prison.

Then follows another doctor; this is Willam Delachambre, aged only forty-eight in 1456. He must have practised his vocation at a very early age. Delachambre had also joined in the tral of the Maid, from fear of Cauchon. His evidence relating to the scene at Saint Ouen is important.

'I remember well,' he says, 'the abjuration which Joan of Arc made. She hesitated a long while before she made it. At length Willam Erard determined her to make it by telling her that, when she had made it, she should be delivered from her prison. Under this promise she at length decided to do so, and she then read a short profession of some six or seven lines written on a piece of folded paper. I was so near that I could see the writing on the paper.'

We next come to the witness whose evidence is, next to that of Dunois, of the greatest importance; it is that of the Recorder, or judges' clerk, Willam Manchon. Born in 1395, he was sixty-one years of age when the rehabilitation tral took place. Manchon's evidence takes up thirty pages in M. Fabre's work, already often referred to—_Le ProcAs de REhabilitation

de Jeanne d'Arc_. Much against his will was Manchon obliged to act in the tral of the Maid, but he did not dare disobey the orders of those who formed the Council of Henry VI. All that he deposed has been made use of in the account of the heroine's life; so now we need do no more than refer to it. The other Recorder who helped Manchon to draw up the minutes of the tral was also examined; this was Willam Colles, called Boisguillaume. He was in his sixty-sixth year. Colles relates that, after the execution, the people used to point out the author of Joan's death with horror—'besides,'

he adds, 'I have been told that the most prominent of those who took part in her condemnation died miserably. Nicolas Midi [who had preached the sermon on the day of her execution, and just before it took place] was stricken with leprosy, 314

and Cauchon died suddenly, while being shaved.'

A third Recorder was also examined, Nicolas Taquel. Then followed the priest Massieu. During the tral of Joan he had acted as bailiff to the Court, and in that capacity had seen much of the prisoner; he had always conveyed her to and from her prison. It may be remembered that it was he who, on Joan's petition to be allowed to kneel before the chapel on her way to the hall of judgment, granted her request, and was threatened by Cauchon, should it again occur, to be thrown into prison where, as Cauchon said to him, he would not have 'the light of sun or moon.' Massieu remained till the end with Joan, and it is he who records that the executioner found, after the body had been destroyed, that the heart remained unconsumed. He also relates that the executioner was ordered to collect the ashes and all that remained, and to throw those few relics of humanity into the Seine, which was accordingly done. Martin Ladvenu followed Massieu. Ladvenu was a Dominican frar: he was one of the few priests who showed some humanity to the victim. It was to him that Joan of Arc confessed on the morning of her death, and it was also to him that the executioner came on the night of the martyrdom, and said that no execution had ever affected him as that one had done. Next to arrive was Isambard de la Pierre, a Dominican priest. He had been an acolyte of the Vice-Inquisitor, LemaItre; he too, like Ladvenu, had

shown sympathy with the sufferer, had given her advice during the tral, and had helped to soothe her last moments.

De la Pierre states in his evidence regarding her supposed refusal to submit herself to the Church, that Joan of Arc, when she was told by her judges to submit herself, thought they meant themselves by the Church of which they spoke to her; but when she was told by him what the Church really signified she always said she submitted herself to it and to the Pope. It was to Isambard de la Pierre that Joan begged for a cross when on the pile and about to die. 'As I was close by the poor child,' he says, 'she begged me humbly to go to the church close at hand and bring her a cross to hold up right before her eyes, till her death, so that the cross on which God hung might as long as she lived appear before her. She died a true and good Christan. In the midst of the flames she never ceased calling on the sacred name of Jesus, and invoking the aid of the saints in Paradise. When the fire was lit she begged me to get down from off the stake with my cross, but to hold it still before her, which I did. At last, bending down her head, with a strong voice calling on the name of Jesus, she gave up the ghost.'

Yet another priest succeeds: this is 'venerable et religieux personne, frare Jean Toutmouille,' of the order of the preaching frars of Rouen. Toutmouille was quite a youth at the time of Joan of Arc's death. Another priest follows, Willam Daval, also one of the order of preaching frars, and belonging to the Church of Saint James at Rouen. He, too, had been, with Isambard, one of the acolytes of the 315

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Vice-Inquisitor. In his evidence, he tells of how, after Isambard had been advising Joan in her prison, he was met by Warwick, who threatened to have him thrown into the river if he continued seeing the prisoner.

We next have 'venerable et circonspecte personne MaItre AndrE

Marguerie'; this was one of Cauchon's most trusted creatures. His 'â *me damnée*,'

Richard de Grouchet, canon of the collegate Church of Sans Faye, is the next witness. There is nothing of any interest in the testimony of these Churchmen, nor in that of Nicolas Dubesert, another canon of Rouen, nor in that of Nicolas Caval.

Next appears a prior, Thomas Marie, of the Church of Saint Michel, near Rouen.

Four other ecclesastics follow them—John Roquier, Peter Bouchier, John Bonnet, John de Lenozoles; but none of these men's testimony is of any interest. The evidence of no less a person than the torturer is called next. He is named—to give him his titles in full—'HonnÍte homme Mauger Lessarmentrer, clerc non marier, appariteur de la cour archiepiscopalle de Rouen.' The name of the chief torturer of the good city of Rouen, Mauger, has a gruesome ring about it—it reminds one of the headsman in Harrison Ainsworth's novel of the Tower of London. Aged fifty-six in 1456, Mauger had seen Joan of Arc when she was brought into the yet extant tower of the castle, and threatened by Cauchon with the torture. 'We were,' deposed Mauger, 'my companion and myself, ordered to go there to torture her.

She was questioned, and she answered with much prudence, and so well, that every one was amazed. Finally, I and my companion left the tower without having laid hands upon her.' Mauger attended at the execution, and this is what he heard and saw there and then. 'As soon as the Bishop (Cauchon) had read the sentence, Joan was taken to the fire. I did not hear whether the civil judges delivered the sentence or not. Joan was placed instantly upon the fire. In the midst of the flames she called out more than six times the name of Jesus. It was when about to give the last breath that she called out with a loud voice, "Jesus!" so that every one could hear her. Nearly everybody wept, for all were overcome with pity.'

After the torturer's witness came that of a soldier, Aimonde de Macy, who was thirty years old when he met Joan in the Castle of Beaurevoir; she being then a prisoner in the charge of Ligny.

De Macy was at Rouen at the time when Lord Stafford came so nearly stabbing the Maid in her prison, and was only prevented from that dastardly act by Warwick.

We next hear the evidence of an attorney, Peter Daron: he had also seen Joan in her prison at Rouen, and had seen her die.

Next we have ‘prudent homme Maitre Jean Favre, maitre des requites du roi Charles VII.’: he, too, was present at the execution.

Next appears upon the scene ‘honnite personne Laurent Guesdon,’ clerk and advocate to the lay court of Rouen. He also had been present at the death of Joan of Arc, and, from his office as lieutenant of the Bailiff of Rouen, he held an important position at the execution; and this is some of his evidence relating to it:

‘I assisted at the last sermon preached at the old market-place. I had accompanied the Bailiff, being then his deputy. The sentence was read by which Joan was abandoned to the secular arm; after that sentence had been pronounced the executioners seized her, before either the Bailiff or myself had time to read the sentence; and she was led up to the stake—which was not as it should have been ordered.’

Next arrive as witnesses two burghers of Rouen, Peter Cusquel and John Moreaux. Both of them had been spectators of the martyrdom, but they have nothing of interest to say about it. And finally—(and doubtless the reader will be glad to come to the end of this interminable procession, as is the writer)—comes the deposition of John Marcel—’bourgeois’ of Paris. Marcel had been in Rouen during the time of the Maid’s tral, and was also present at the end of her life. M. Fabre, in concluding in his book the translation of the testimonies of the long list of witnesses given by him for the first time in full, makes a great point of the universal concurrence of those who knew Joan of Arc as to her undoubted purity of person as well as of mind: that fact is of the greatest importance as regarded the rehabilitation of the Maid of Orleans. That is a subject which it is not now necessary to do more than to allude to; but to the French judges in the time of the tral of the rehabilitation, the fact of Joan of Arc being proved to have been incontestably a virgin was of the highest interest. It was reserved for a countryman of Joan of Arc’s (Du Bellay) to invent a legend to disprove the fact; and to the everlasting

shame of French literature, Voltaire adopted the lying calumny in his licentious burlesque-heroic poem, *La Pucelle d'OrlEans*.

The sentence of rehabilitation which fills in the translation a dozen of M.

Fabre's pages, was solemnly delivered in the great hall of the archiepiscopal palace at Rouen. On that occasion one of Joan of Arc's brothers, John, was present.

The sentence which was framed to wipe away the iniquity of the judgment by which the heroine had been condemned, was delivered by the Archbishop of Rheims in the presence of a vast concourse of people, among whom were the Bishops of Paris and of Coutances. Among other things ordered to honour the memory of the Martyr, it was ordained that after a sermon preached on the spot where the act of abjuration had taken place in the cemetery of the Church of Saint 317

Ouen, and also on the site of the spot where had stood the stake and pyre, two crosses should be erected.

Crosses were placed not only there, and in Rouen, but also on other spots.

It is interesting to know that one of these crosses can still be seen in the Forest of Compagne; and it is traditionally said that this cross at Compagne was placed there by no other than Dunois himself. Both the crosses at Rouen have disappeared centuries ago. Processions took place at Rouen, and all was done that the Church could do to wash out the indelible stain of its action four-and-twenty years before the time of the rehabilitation. In 1431, the clergy of France, to please the English, had in the name of orthodoxy, and with the tolerance of the Pope, denounced Joan of Arc as 'a heretic and idolatress.' In 1456, the same French clergy, to please Charles VII., in the name of religion and justice pronounced the memory of Joan of Arc free from all taint of heresy and of idolatry, and ordered processions and erected crosses in her honour to keep her memory fresh in the land.

Today, even in France, no thoroughly satisfactory history exists of Joan of Arc, although a large number of histories have been written. Following is an enu-meration of the most important.

As was natural while her countrymen were divided into two camps, those writers who belonged to the side of the English attacked the heroine, or rather her mission, with ill-placed zeal. Of them Enguerrand de Monstrelet was the most eminent.

Less well known chroniclers on the national side, such as Philip de Bergame, an Augustinan monk, on the other hand exaggerate the deeds of the Maid. None of these chroniclers' writings can be called histories of Joan of Arc. Nor in the following (the sixteenth) century, did such writers as Du Bellay and Haillon do more than allude to Joan of Arc; the first in his Instructions sur le fait de la guerre, and the second in his book on the Affaires de France.

Haillon had written disparagingly of the heroine. It had the effect of raising the ire of that learned scribe Willam Postel, who wrote that the actions and renown of Joan of Arc were as necessary to maintain as the Bible itself. With Postel the celebrated jurisconsult Stephen Pasquier was quite in accord, and in his work called Recherches sur la France, he writes that 'never had any one saved France so opportunely or so well as did this Maid.' In 1576 a book was published by the magistrates of Orleans relating to the siege of their town, in which all honour was given to the heroine for the part she had taken in its delivery. In the preface to that book the following sentiment is expressed:—'It is a lamentable fact that the Maid,

respected by all other nations, the English alone excepted, finds amongst her countrymen writings to injure her memory by people who are greater enemies to the honour of France than those who are strangers to that country.'

It should be noted that as early as the year 1534 the famous early chronicler Polydore Virgile, Italan by origin, wrote a voluminous history of England in

twenty-six books, and treated the Maid's mission as one inspired by divine influence, severely blaming her judges for their inhuman conduct towards her.

In 1610 a book was published discussing the origin of the family of the Maid of Orleans; a work of little value. In 1612 one of the descendants of a brother of Joan of Arc—Charles du Lys—published a slight work called _TraitE sommaire sur le nom, les armes, la naissance et la parentE de la Pucelle et de ses frAres_. In that same year the first history of Joan of Arc was published, also by a descendant of one of her brothers, John Hordal. This book was in Latin; it was entitled '_The History of Joan of Arc, that very noble heroine_.' Soon after an elaborated work, based on this book, was produced by Edmond Richer, a doctor of theology in Paris.

The next account of the Maid of any length occurs in MEzarie's huge History of France, It was published between 1643 and 1652. In 1661 appeared a work called _L'Histoire du roi Charles VII., contenant les choses mEmorables de 1422 ‡

1466_. It was in this work, which was compiled by Denis Godefroy, that the manuscripts of the Chronique de la Pucelle were first printed. This chronicle concerns the events which occurred between the years 1422 and 1429. Although not a complete history of the heroine, it is the earliest account. It was republished by Buchon, by Petitot, and by Quicherat; and it was consulted by Michelet when writing his account of Joan of Arc. M. Vallet de Viriville believes the Chronicle of the Maiden to have been written by G. Cousinot, Chancellor of the Duke of Orleans, who was present at the siege of Orleans. At the close of the seventeenth century was published a history of France by a Jesuit priest named David, in which there is some account of Joan of Arc; but David's history is more remarkable for being a colos-sal list of falsehoods than for any other merit.

We now arrive at the eighteenth century, and still find no tolerable history of Joan of Arc. In the year 1753 the AbbE Longlet Dufresnoy published a _Life of Joan of Arc_; it is totally devoid of any merit.

In 1790 ClEment de l'Averdy published some notices relating to the tral and condemnation of Joan of Arc. These notices led up to, and were followed by

the publications of Petitot, Buchon, Michaud, and Pougoulat. At length, under the 319

protection of the Society of French History, the learned author Quicherat produced his all-important works. That distinguished historan and antiquaran began his career under Charlet. In 1847 he was appointed Professor of ArchÊology, and later, Director of the Institute of the Charters. Between 1841 and 1850 he edited the original documents relating to the trals of Joan of Arc—those of her condemnation and of her rehabilitation. Of these only a few extracts had previously been published by M. l'Averdy. The series edited by Quicherat consists of five bulky tomes. Although when Michelet was writing his history of France, Quicherat's work had not yet been published, the chronicler helped the historan by lending Michelet the MSS. he was then annotating.

But to return to the earlier years of the century. In 1817, Lebrun des Charnettes published a history of Joan of Arc in four volumes; this history of the Maid was up to that time the best that had been written. In the same year there was published another history of the heroine by M. Berrat Saint-Prix. The best thing that work contains is an itinerary of the different places at which Joan of Arc passed the last three years of her short existence. It is a useful list for any one who wishes to visit the scenes connected with her wonderful history.

Sismondi devotes a part of the thirteenth volume of his History of France, published between 1821 and 1844, to the Maid of Orleans. He sums up the action of the Church to her in these words: 'The Church was against the Maid. All persons not delegated by her who pretended to have supernatural powers were accused of using magical arts.'

Barante in his famous history of the Dukes of Burgundy, published in 1824, gives a somewhat meagre and uninteresting account of Joan of Arc. In 1821 appeared a Life of the heroine, by Jollois, under whose direction the little monument was placed at Domremy in honour of the Maid.

Alexandre Dumas has left among his numberless works a *Life of Johanne la Pucelle*, which is neither true history nor romance, but a jumble of both, and is a work hardly worthy the author, but there are some fine expressions in the book.

Dumas christened Joan of Arc 'The Christ of France.' Michelet in the fifth volume of his Histoire de France published in 1841, has written what will probably always be considered the best account of the Maid. Although only one hundred and thirty pages are given to her life, these pages form a book in themselves, and as a separate volume Michelet's Life of Joan of Arc has gone through a large number of editions, the latest a handsome illustrated one, published by Hachette in 1888.

One cannot help regretting that so great a writer should allow his Anglophobism to appear to such an extent in some of the pages of his work.

Michelet attacks the entire English nation as if they had been individually and collectively guilty of Joan of Arc's death. He even goes out of his way to abuse English literature in this amazing passage: 'De Shakespeare ‡ Milton, de Milton ‡

Byron leur belle et simple littErature est sceptique, judaÔque, satanique.' It is pitable that so distinguished a writer as was Michelet should pen such rubbish, but when a Frenchman writes on the subject of Joan of Arc much should be forgiven him. More serious than the abuse of the English in Michelet's work are the inaccuracies in his account of Joan of Arc. For instance, he writes of the heroine watching the English coast from her prison in the castle of Crotoy. Her eyesight must have been telescopic had she been able to do so, for eighty miles of sea stretch between the site of Crotoy and the English coast.

We next come to Henry Martin's history of France. In this work a third part of the sixth volume is consecrated to Joan of Arc, whom he calls the 'Messah of France.'

M. Wallon, however, is the writer who has given France the most complete biography of her heroine. This work, published by Hachette, had in 1879 attained its fifth edition. A most sumptuously illustrated edition appeared in 1876, one of those splendidly illustrated books in which the French press has no rival. That book is the finest monument which has appeared to honour the memory of the Maid of Orleans. Its illustrations contain views of all places and memorals connected with the heroine from the fifteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century.

The text of Wallon's Life is, however, wanting in charm, and it is, as M. Veuillot writes of it, 'un livre serieuse et solide.' Sainte-Beuve has been still more severe in his judgment on Wallon's book, which he calls 'la faiblesse mime.'

Some slighter histories may be alluded to: one by Lamartine, unworthy of the author and the subject; another by M. Abel Desjardins; a third by Villaume; a fourth by M. Lafontaine. There is an interesting study by Simon Luce on Joan of Arc's early years; and last, but certainly not least, the three works by M. Joseph Fabre, relating to Joan of Arc's life, her tral, her condemnation, and her rehabilitation. In the two last works the whole of the long examination appears for the first time, translated into French from the Latin—documents invaluable to any one studying the heroine's life.

In England little has been written in prose relating to Joan of Arc that will be likely to live. The early chroniclers were monstrously unjust to her. It is enough to allude to the lying and scurrilous abuse which such writers as Robert Fabyan, in his chronicles on the history of England and of France, published in 1516, heaped upon Joan of Arc. Hall's and Holinshed's chronicles, from which the author of the 321

First Part of _ *King Henry VI.*_ borrowed so largely, sinned as deeply. Hall's authorities among French writers were Monstrelet, Bouchet, Mayer, Argentan, Gile Corozet, and the annals of France and Aquitaine—and of English writers, Fabyan, Caxton, John Harding, Sir Thomas More, Basset, Balantyne, and the Chronicle of London.

The annalist Stow, Hume's 'honest historan,' is less unjust and bitter in his account of Joan of Arc than are Hall and Holinshed. Thomas Fuller appears not to have settled to his satisfaction whether Joan of Arc was a witch or a heroine.

In the seventeenth century we have only a handful of poor writers who have treated more or less badly of the Maid, such as Daniel, Martyn, and Sir Richard Baker. It is not until well into the eighteenth century that a man of letters appears capable of giving an unprejudiced and true history of the life of Joan of Arc: this historan is Guthrie, who published, between the years 1744 and 1751, a long history of England. M. Darmesteter has named this author 'a village Bossuet.'

Coming to our own days we have quite a crowd of writers who have written with enthusasm on the Maid of Domremy. It is sufficient to name the most prominent of these—Landor, Sir James Mackintosh, John Sterling, Lord Mahon, De Quincey, and J.R. Green.

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